THE WAR NOVEL

—William J. Smith

THE

Commonweal

Spring Book Issue

Christianity and Ideologies

by Christopher Dawson

The Anomaly of Andre Gide

by Martin Turnell

Anthony Bailey James Greene Richard Hayes

R. T. Horchler John P. Sisk

Henry Popkin Bette Richart Philip T. Hartung

Volume LXIV, No. 6 May 11, 1956 Twenty Cents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Home Atmosphere

to enrich all the rest of their lives . . .

Make the simplest home meal a traditional rite . . . expressive of settled lives walled around with peace and security! A meal of beauty, harbored in a sea of candlelight!

That's the kind of home atmosphere in which a taste for the simpler, sweeter pleasures of life is most likely to develop: Home to which the young people turn naturally for sociability and entertainment . . . for their Coke parties, fun fests and snacks after the dance or game!

Taperlites* help to weave a spell of warmth, color and friendliness . . . help to lift everyday surroundings to the emotional level of story-book charm, underscoring the rich satisfactions of artistic home living where order and dignity rule in all social relationships.

Will & Baumer
CANDLE CO., INC.

IN OUR SECOND CENTURY OF FINE CANDLE MAKING
SYRACUSE BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO
MONTREAL LOS ANGELES

Buy TAPERLITES in a range of popular colors and 4 graceful sizes at your nearest store. Recognize them by the handy Two-Pack container and by the exclusive FIRM-FIT end that is easier to place and holds the TAPERLITE proudly erect.

***Registered Trademark**

THIS WEEK

Week by Week 135

Christianity and Ideologies
by Christopher Dawson 139

The Anomaly of André Gide
by Martin Turnell 143

The War Novel
by William J. Smith 146

The Stage
by Richard Hayes 149

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 150

Communications 151

Books 154

THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors
JAMES FINN
PHILIP SCHARPER

Contributing Editors
PHILIP BURNHAM
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1956 in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685.

U. S. and Canada, $7.50 a year. Foreign, $9.50. Single copies 20¢.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

ENLARGING NATO

WHAT IS the basic debate about the success of the Soviet Union's foreign policy in the post-Stalin years? Mr. Dulles and some of his critics would have it that imminence of a "hot war" supplies the key criterion. Once that premise is granted, American and allied policy can be said to be winning out in that a Russian attack appears less likely now than in Stalin's heyday. If the debate is kept on this terrain, all that is required to clinch the argument is to explain away two fears. The tensions aggravated by recent Soviet intervention in the Middle East have to be discounted (perhaps by means of a reminder that the Kremlin would be uncomfortable about a war close to Soviet borders). Then the occasional bluster of the present Soviet leaders, with their references to Russian capabilities in the field of mass destruction, has to be deflated by reference to the existing "stalemate" in nuclear weapons.

Politically effective as it may be here in the United States to confine the argument about our success to the likelihood of a war that all men rightly dread, it still leaves the unpalatable fact that the latest tactics of the Soviet Union are actually making great inroads. Instead of preparing immediately to fly over and march on Western Europe, the Soviet Union has gone about things gradually. For the time being it has shifted the concentration of its fire to the Middle East and other underdeveloped areas, thereby endangering Europe's supply of oil and other vital raw materials. It also weakens European sentiment for joint defense by striking a less warlike pose, cultivating collaboration with the Socialists in the various NATO-member countries and exerting pressure on those lands where there are important American military bases. These tactics have proved to be eminently successful. The Soviet Union is piling up important gains.

Curiously enough, Mr. Dulles' aforementioned analysis of the situation finds a strong echo in a Europe which has served as the battlefield for two world wars. It is understandable that peoples who have undergone the full-fledged ravages of modern war readily agree that successful avoidance of all-out hostilities is tantamount to winning the cold war. Yet in this they and Secretary Dulles are at least partially mistaken.

MR. DULLES himself has indeed now intimated that the time has come for the scope of the NATO organization to be enlarged to meet this challenge. The United States herself is not to propose these developments at the NATO meeting but is ready to consider sympathetically whatever is brought forward by other member nations.

The hope is that determined exploration of the possibilities for economic collaboration provided for in Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty will give NATO a greatly needed shot in the arm. On the one hand there are the possibilities of further European unification along the lines instituted by the Schuman plan. Subsidiary to this, but of considerable importance, is the ironing out of difficulties that have arisen from the competition of European nations for markets.

The prospect which calls for the greatest ingenuity, and is aimed at meeting the Soviet economic offensive head-on, is a large-scale program of NATO economic aid to the underdeveloped countries. At first such aid would be directed primarily to countries which already are friends and allies. Then, if NATO succeeds in expanding its economic, political and social activities so that it is no longer merely a defensive military formation, it may find its economic assistance acceptable to nations of greater neutralist tendencies. Yet all the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

while the organization must nonetheless keep ever in view its primary role as defender of Western Europe.

This is a most intricate and thorn-studded task, calling for a degree of vision and practicality not yet manifested by American and other leaders. It would be a tremendous thing, however, if under the stimulus of Soviet intrigue colonial needs and Western know-how should actually be brought together.

CATHOLICISM, WRITERS AND CRITICS

THERE ARE increasing indications, tentative and encouraging, that American critics are coming to terms with contemporary literary works which are concerned with religion, particularly Catholicism. Too often, in the past, critics who discussed novels, stories, plays and poems that were concerned with religion have tended to have preformed opinions. Instead of considering the work and thinking through to a reasoned judgment, they started with strong assumptions that largely determined their conclusions.

In their most simplified form the assumptions were these. The non-Catholic critic denied artistic freedom to the modern writer who believed that people were subject to divine influence. Such influence, they said, would inevitably appear as the *deus ex machina,* robbing the work of its authenticity. Catholics had such beliefs; ergo, they could produce no authentic work. In a sophisticated form, this is the argument Jean-Paul Sartre used in his attack on François Mauriac which concluded with the judgment: "God is no artist; neither is M. Mauriac."

Catholic critics—and writers—were capable of equal simplicities. Those writers, they argued, who were aware of the real dimensions of human existence could see man in his fallen nature with a truer perspective and could write of him with greater depth and clarity than could other artists. Catholics, of course, had such awareness. They did, therefore, produce works that were more truly artistic.

It should be recognized that these assumptions, however distorted in themselves and harmful to the judgments that followed from them, had some basis in fact. For Catholic writers often did write as if divine intervention were at their disposal, as if grace were a commodity they could dispense at will, and as though it were sufficient to name virtues and evils in order to evoke their reality. The result was not literature, but propagandizing tracts of the worst kind.

On the other hand, a writer who was Catholic could have special insights as well as special interests. For him light slanted upon reality as it could not for the non-religious writer, and he could often write of areas of human existence which other writers were unaware of or were uninterested in. But given this opportunity, what he made of it depended—as it does for all artists—on his own ability and integrity.

If the reviews of recent works by Graham Greene, J. F. Powers, Caroline Gordon, Flannery O'Connor and others is a true indication, critics are increasingly aware that neither the proclaimed beliefs of the writer nor the subject matter of his work determines its value. Whether the apparent subject of the work involved cruelty, sex, conversion, rectory life, death, evil or sin, most critics, Catholic and non-Catholic, who wrote for responsible newspapers and magazines criticized and judged these books with a freedom from parochialism and prejudice that would have been exceptional only twenty years ago. The reception of J. F. Powers' *The Presence of Grace* is a notable example.

These are encouraging signs in the literary life of America. They point to a greater maturity on the part of both critics and writers. Like spring buds they might, of course, be hurt by an early frost or forced cultivation. There still exist critics who proclaim their innocence of all things Catholic as if they were acknowledging their ignorance of the initiation ritual of a hidden African tribe; and there are Catholic critics who speak of a full-fledged renaissance where there is only a fledgling. There is even an early reaction against "religious" art and artists started by those who would like to relate the New Conservatism with the New Criticism, and both with "reactionary" religion. But it was a long winter; we have no right to expect an early summer.

NEXT WEEK

CLYDE T. ELLIS writes about twenty years of rural electrification.

"The American farmer learned the hard way that the key to obtaining the greatest benefit from electricity is keeping the supply plentiful and the costs down. And he is convinced that the lessons he has learned over the past twenty years can be applied in cities and suburbs everywhere."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BANNING H-BOMB TESTS

ADLAI STEVENSON probably realized that he was inching out on a rather thin political limb recently when he tentatively suggested that the U.S. consider a self-imposed ban on further hydrogen bomb tests. What he may not have fully anticipated, however, is that his opponents would hack away at the limb with such irrelevant arguments.

Mr. Stevenson's position was, first of all, modest and reasonable enough. He suggested that this country should take the lead, not remain alone, in banning such tests. If other nations should persist in H-bomb tests, he said that "we will know about it and we can reconsider our policy." Mr. Stevenson was not, then, as some of his critics seemed to suggest, advocating a unilateral ban which would leave Russia free to experiment endlessly with H-bomb development.

Nor does the Stevenson proposal, coupled with his charge that the Administration has been "dangerously dilatory" on a guided missile program, constitute a paradox, as President Eisenhower deems it. First of all, Mr. Stevenson did not call for an end "to all research on the hydrogen bombs," as the President seemed to think, and further, Mr. Stevenson was merely seconding, as it were, a similar proposal made by Thomas E. Murray of the Atomic Energy Commission, who, for military as well as moral considerations, questioned the multiplying and enlarging of weapons at present almost incomprehensible in their destructive power.

One need not, then, agree with Mr. Stevenson to realize that his proposal merits serious discussion. It *would* be a dramatic illustration to the world of America's will for peace; it *would* compel Russia to follow the lead of the U.S. or stand unmasked at the bar of world opinion; it *would* evidence a national awareness of the obligation in conscience which, in the words of Pope Pius, "lies upon nations and their leaders alike" where use and experimentation in nuclear weapons are concerned.

Mr. Stevenson has touched on a complex and important problem; his solution involves undoubted risks, but deserves more than the irrelevancies, or, even worse, the silence which it has so far received.

ANNIVERSARY AND A TRIBUTE

THIS MONTH the world will celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pope Pius XI's social encyclical, "Reconstructing the Social Order," which in turn marked the fortieth anniversary of Pope Leo's "Condition of Labor." It is an occasion that should be noted, yet it is not easy to know just what to say.

The encyclical by Pope Pius was recognized as a great document when it was first published in 1931. For some courageous spirits it immediately became an inspiration to the work they were doing in the depths of the great depression. Today, it seems safe to say, the greatness of the encyclical is not felt as deeply by many people. The document has not gone out of circulation, nor have its principles lost their vitality, but the times have changed. For most Americans prosperity has dulled the effect of the papal call to social reform.

It is a pity that it seems to take an economic depression to interest most people in the problem of humanizing and Christianizing social institutions. But since this appears to be the case, comments on the anniversary of "Reconstructing the Social Order" might well pay tribute to the dedicated persons, clerical and lay, who have worked to apply its principles to the American scene, often against great odds. Some are well known; others are relatively obscure. A few of the great pioneers, like Monsignor John A. Ryan and Dom Virgil Michel, are now dead. Most continue their labors, in unions and business, in labor schools and forums, in high schools, colleges, and universities. Compared to the total Catholic population, their number is small, and their task has never been easy. In depression days, people would listen, but many denounced the papal words as "too radical." Today the encyclicals do not sound so radical, but the problem is to get people to listen. Certainly, on the anniversary of the great social encyclicals those who have worked so hard to make them known and to put them into practice deserve a tribute, even anonymously. We are all very much in their debt.

TROUBLE WITH TIME

WE ARE having a difficult time these days keeping ourselves firmly anchored in 1956, and after considerable self-analysis we believe we have figured out the cause of our problem.

David Lawrence recently said, for example, that President Eisenhower's speech to the newspaper editors contained a carefully worded encouragement to revolution, aimed at the people behind the Iron Curtain. This statement alone was enough to throw us off for a while; after all, not much has been heard about liberation as opposed to containment since the last election. Then again, a few

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

weeks ago Mr. Eisenhower assured the assembled leaders of the GOP that they were engaged in a Great Crusade, based on belief in people and principles. Be it noted to our shame that until he brought it up again we had almost forgotten about the Great Crusade.

To top it all off, the other day we happened to pick up a copy of the N.Y. *Daily News*, a tabloid relative of the Chicago *Tribune*. We started to read John O'Donnell, and all the old familiar phrases just leaped out at us. Referring to the Secretary of State, he wrote: "Now he goes off again. This time, so help us, to play wet nurse to the dying and anemic NATO which of course should have been strangled at birth, a monstrosity as shocking as the United Nations charter. The convict Alger Hiss was the master midwife at the 1945 San Francisco betrayal. . . . The Marshall Plan, proclaimed in Harvard Yard . . . . has of course been a complete military and financial bust. The French have welshed on every promise . . . . and the others . . . . have been either dragging their heels or thumbing their noses. . . . [The Secretary of State] gets on his bipartisan policy bicycle and pedals away—this time to make in Paris the supreme diplomatic effort of trying to revive the already somewhat putrescent remains of military alliance NATO by pumping in some billions of U.S. tax dollars. . . . Oh, well, Paris is lovely in the spring. . . . But why don't we Americans stay home, sometime?"

The first time through we read this too hastily, and we ended up with the idea that the *Daily News* had somehow run an old column by mistake. On more careful reading, however, it turned out that Mr. O'Donnell was unmistakably right up-to-the-minute, after all. He had the GOP's own John Foster Dulles in mind all the time, rather than Harry Truman's Dean Acheson; it was only the adjectives that threw us off. The column did give us a turn for a moment, though, especially when combined with the revival of the Great Crusade and a return to encouraging revolution. In essence, our feelings are very much like those of a man who unwittingly goes to an old movie he saw years before; the lines are somehow familiar, even if we are not completely certain just what comes next.

RUSSIA IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SOVIET strategy continues to make impressive gains as it swings its monolithic strength against the divided defenses of the West. The latest example can be found in the Middle East, where Russia has pushed open the door while the United States, Britain and France were debating how best to lock it.

In 1950 these governments drew up the Tripartite Declaration which pledged them to take action to halt any war in the Middle East if the UN should fail to halt hostilities. Such a declaration, which is theoretically still binding on the Big Three, presupposed a common policy toward Israel and the Arab nations. Events of the last year have shown clearly, however, that the Big Three have no common policy in the Middle East. In fact, they seem to have no policy at all except to give their blessings to UN Secretary General Hammarskjold as he tries to patch up armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states. The weakness of this position is that, no matter how well Mr. Hammarskjold succeeds, he is only applying bandages. The sources of infection remain—the vexed problem of the Arab refugees in Palestine, control of the waters of the Jordan, and, most immediately, the shipment to Israel of defensive arms to offset the military equipment supplied to Egypt and Syria by the Soviet. On each of these questions the common policy presupposed in 1950 has splintered into three separate policies by 1956.

As a result of the divided and divisive policies of the Big Three, the Soviet Union has now become a power in the Middle East. This fact is recognized in the joint communique issued by the British and Soviet governments after the visit of the Russian leaders to England. Both countries have now pledged themselves to give "the necessary support to the United Nations in strengthening peace in the Palestine area." Earlier, President Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles had also declared that U.S. action regarding the Middle East should be taken through the UN. In view of the Soviet veto in the Security Council, the present positions of both the United States and Britain commit them to seek solutions which will be acceptable to the Soviet Union.

This fact means a significant gain of Soviet strength in this crucial area of the world. Only last month, the Soviet delegation to the UN was informed, but not consulted, about the U. S.-sponsored resolution to send Mr. Hammarskjold to the Middle East; hereafter, the Soviets will have a strong voice in drawing up any such action. It is, of course, hard to predict just what kind of game Russia will play now that in the Middle East the Big Three has suddenly become the Big Four; what is clear is that the West has dealt her some fine cards.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christianity and Ideologies

"IDEOLOGY HAS TAKEN THE PLACE OF THEOLOGY AS THE CREATOR OF SOCIAL IDEALS AND THE GUIDE OF PUBLIC OPINION"

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

THE FOUR great civilizations which constituted the world that we know, were all spiritual communities that owed their unity to a common religion. The civilization of India was the creation of Brahmanism, and that of China had been formed and molded by the Confucian tradition; Islam was essentially the society of the True Believers, who accepted the Law of the Prophet; and Europe was identified with Christendom. Thus political citizenship and racial origins were secondary to religious belief and practice. The Indian who ceased to observe the laws of caste and the worship of the gods and accepted the teaching of Mohammed, ceased to be a Hindu and became a Moslem. And, in the same way, the western Moslem who became a Christian did not merely change his religion; he passed over from one civilization to another and acquired rights of citizenship in a new society.

During the last two centuries this situation has gradually changed. Nationality has taken the place of religion as the ultimate principle of social organization, and ideology has taken the place of theology as the creator of social ideals and the guide of public opinion. All over the world, beginning in Western Europe and extending gradually to the most remote regions of Asia and Africa, a change has taken place in the conditions of human existence and in the ways of social thought. The world has been made one, first by European trade, conquest and colonization, and later by Western science and technology. And behind the railway, the motor lorry and the airplane, there has spread a wave of secular ideas which had their origins in Europe in the age of the Enlightenment of the French Revolution, and which have communicated the ideas of political liberty and social equality, of nationality and self-determination from one people to another until they have become literally world-wide.

Although these ideas all had a common origin, during the nineteenth century they became differentiated into a number of distinct ideologies which were regarded as mutually exclusive and tended to become embodied in political parties and regimes. Thus Liberalism and Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism, Communism and Fascism all acquired this ideological form, although they were rarely found in a pure state. For example, we find National Liberalism and National Socialism in Germany, Liberal Democracy and Social Democracy in France and other similar compounds in other countries. At the present time there is a tendency for Liberal Democracy of the American type and Communist Socialism of the Russian type to become the opposite poles round which all the other ideologies and political regimes range themselves.

Thus we have two distinct ideological complexes, Western Democracy and Eastern Soviet Communism, which threaten to divide the world between them. Both of them are European, and even Western European in origin, but neither of them has its center in Europe; one is Eurasian and the other is Euramerican. Both of them are secular ideologies as contrasted with the religious ideologies on which the four ancient world civilizations were based. Yet neither of them is entirely secular; Western Democracy is tending more and more to regard itself as the ally and protector of religion, while Soviet Communism, in spite of its avowedly anti-religious character, has always owed much of its success to its quasi-religious appeal. This is especially true in Asia, where Communism appears in the guise of a new religious or social way of salvation which promises to liberate men from oppression and suffering, on condition that they accept its authority and discipline by an act of unconditional surrender and obedience.

HOW does Europe stand in the face of this situation? Its position differs from both that of America and that of Asia. America has grown up with the new ideology. It can hardly conceive of a society which is not secular and democratic, since this is the only society it has known. In Asia, on the other hand, the movement of secularization is very recent and very alien to the traditions of Asiatic culture; indeed, it was only with the coming of Communism that the secular ideologies reached the masses and imparted

Mr. Dawson is the author of The Making of Europe, Progress and Religion, and numerous other studies of history, religion and culture.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a revolutionary momentum to the movement of social change. Even to-day in India, and even more in the Islamic world, the life of the people is still governed by religious beliefs and practices rather than by the secular ideologies.

In Europe, the ideologies are a native growth and have exercised a profound influence on European culture for at least two centuries. Nevertheless they have never completely destroyed the older tradition of Western Christendom, to which Europe owed its existence and its original sense of spiritual and cultural unity, and these two elements still exist today in a state of unstable equilibrium and tension. On the Continent, Christian opinion has become organized through political parties and social programs in the ideological pattern, so that it is sometimes regarded as one of the rival ideologies. In England, however, where this development has not occurred and where the political parties are strictly non-confessional, as in America, the pre-revolutionary tradition of the Christian state has never been officially disavowed, so that we still preserve the forms of a Christian monarchy and the legal establishment of the Christian church.

WHAT is the reason for this anomalous state of things which differentiates Europe from both America and Asia? There is no doubt that it is very deeply rooted in the history of the past and it seems to correspond to certain fundamental features of Western cultures. In the first place, I believe that the ideological diversity and tension of modern Europe is comparable to, and to some extent caused by, the religious diversity and tension of post-Reformation Europe. The theological disputes of the Reformation familiarized the masses with ideological issues, and the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries involved the same confusion of convictions, propaganda and power politics with which we are so familiar today. Moreover, the eighteenth century Enlightenment, the source of the modern ideological development, may be regarded historically as a kind of Second Reformation which in certain respects, as, for instance, in the destruction of the temporal power of the Church and the secularization of church property, carried out the work of the earlier Reformation in those parts of Europe which had previously been immune.

Owing to this long familiarity with internal conflict and controversy, the impact of the new ideologies and the cold war of propaganda between opposing factions has been less devastating in Europe than elsewhere, since European culture can tolerate a much greater degree of internal tension than can other civilizations without losing its sense of continuity and community. This was largely due to the fact that in the past the opposing religions and ideologies of the West possessed a common origin and shared certain common principles and beliefs. Thus, in spite of their intense hostility to one another, Catholics and Protestants all regarded themselves as Christians, and the vast majority on both sides accepted the Bible and the Creeds, and

appealed to the teachings of the Fathers in support of their respective principles. Even the theological controversies, which were the source of division, also led to the recognition of common positions and to alliances between different schools of thought, so that Lutherans could support Catholics in their controversy with the Socinians, and Jansenists could support Calvinists in their attack on the Arminians. While religious toleration was practically non-existent and freedom of thought was rare in either camp, a practical *modus vivendi* was worked out which made it possible for a Catholic like Descartes to live in Holland and Sweden and a Protestant like Leibniz to carry on his correspondence with Bossuet and the French Jesuits on religious problems.

In the same way, the conflicting ideologies of the nineteenth century all shared the common intellectual background of the European Enlightenment. All of them possessed a similar faith in social and scientific progress. All of them were liberal in the sense that they believed in the Rights of Man and regarded individual liberty, national freedom or social equality as the supreme good. Marx and Mazzini, Blanqui and Bakunin, Proudhon and Louis Blanc were all children of the Revolution and their internecine feuds were like those of the Jacobins and the Girondins in the days of the First Republic.

At the same time, the breach between the ideologies and Christianity was neither complete nor consistent at this period. Between 1830 and 1850 a certain *rapprochement* between them took place, and Liberals like Lamartine, Socialists like Bazard and Democrats like Leroux claimed that their ideas represented a new application of Christian principles to the political and economic spheres. This was especially the case in Great Britain, where the ideologies possessed no revolutionary background. Here Liberalism owed its poli-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tical influence to its alliance with the Nonconformist churches, and the Labor movement developed under the leadership of pious nonconformists and lay preachers like Burt, Fenwick and Keir Hardie. This is not surprising when one remembers that in Great Britain the connection between political opposition and religious dissent dates back to the Puritan revolution of the seventeenth century and that this tradition has never been entirely lost.

This is a tradition which England shares with America, in contrast to the Continent, since the American Revolution, in spite of its close connection with the European Enlightenment, also owed much to the Puritan tradition, which had survived almost intact in New England. In Russia, on the other hand, where the new Western ideologies did not penetrate until the nineteenth century, the opposition between them and the traditional culture of Orthodox Christendom was from the beginning conscious and avowed and this is one of the chief causes that has led to that polar opposition between Russian Communism and American Democracy which now divides the world.

THUS IT would seem that the political and ideological disunity of Europe in the past has been a source of strength, as well as of weakness, since in spite of the heavy cost which this disunity has involved, it has given Europe the opportunity of developing a richer and more many-sided pattern of life and thought than could have been achieved by a more unitary type of culture.

Moreover, this tradition of diversity does not date from the Reformation and the religious divisions of Western Christendom, although it was accentuated by them. Its origins are much earlier and it represents something that is inseparable from the nature of European culture. For Europe is not a natural unity like

China or India; its cultural origins are due not only to the extension of the higher culture of the old Mediterranean world to Western and Northern Europe, but also to the dual character of this cultural inheritance. For the culture of the Later Roman Empire, which was handed on to the Latin West and the Byzantine East, was compounded of two elements: the classical culture of Greece and Rome and the religious culture of the Christian Church. Each of these elements possessed its own moral and intellectual traditions, which were embodied in different literatures, different social institutions and different ethical systems.

At first glance it seems as though the fall of the Empire must have involved the disappearance of the classical tradition, since the Church remained the only link between the barbarian peoples and the civilization of the ancient world; and the monasteries, which were the chief centers of literary culture, were devoted by their institution to the ascetic ideals that seemed most irreconcilable with the spirit of classical humanism. In fact, however, it was the monasteries that secured the survival of the inheritance of classical culture through their adaptation of the old liberal education of the schools of the Later Roman Empire to the needs of the new ecclesiastical culture. This preservation of the old curriculum of the Liberal Arts meant that classical literature remained the basis of Western intellectual training. Virgil and Cicero, Ovid and Seneca, Horace and Quintilian were not merely school books, they became the seeds of a new growth of classical humanism in Western soil. Again and again—in the eighth century as well as in the twelfth and fifteenth centuries—the higher culture of Western Europe was fertilized by renewed contacts with the literary sources of classical culture. At first this influence only reached a small clerical minority, but it steadily increased throughout the later Middle Ages until, by the time of the Renaissance, it became the basis of lay education and inspired the development of vernacular literatures.

In this way the tradition of classical culture, which is also the tradition of humanism, became one of the great formative elements in Western culture. But this did not involve the denial or supersession of the Christian tradition, as has often been suggested by the historians of the Renaissance or the Enlightenment. As the humanist tradition remained alive during the Middle Ages, so the Christian tradition preserved its vitality in the post-Renaissance period, and it is only when both these traditions remain in living and fruitful contact with one another that Western culture attains its highest and most characteristic achievements. Nevertheless, this harmony and sympathetic collaboration between two such diverse traditions is difficult to maintain, and their diversity and tension have manifested themselves throughout the course of European history in those religious and ideological conflicts which I have already discussed. The unity of Europe has always been much more fragile than that of the great civilizations of Asia but at the same time it has been more flexible and more capable than any other culture of assimilating new elements and producing new movements of thought and new forms of social institutions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Seen from this point of view, the modern ideologies are characteristic products of European culture. They become a symptom of cultural decadence only when they become totalitarian and attempt to destroy the spiritual foundations on which European culture is based. Christianity and humanism are both super-ideological in character. They create ideologies, but are not created by them. Their origins are older than those of Europe itself and they extend their influence far into the unconscious depths of the soul of Western man.

Hence the attempt to confine the whole of Western civilization in the strait-jacket of an ideology and to exclude all cultural and spiritual values which are not created by it or dependent on it is destructive of the inner nature of Western culture and must inevitably lead to disaster.

No doubt the Communist will argue that this is a necessary stage in the evolution of modern culture; that as the feudal Christian order was replaced by the bourgeois humanist order, so the latter must now give place to the new social order of scientific social ideology based on modern science. But if science is divorced from humanism and Christianity, it ceases to be a creative source of culture. It is capable of creating new scientific techniques and technologies but these are the servants of the dominant ideology which, in its turn, is the servant of a political party or dictator. No civilization can live by politics alone, and when a culture becomes merely an organ of political propaganda it is dead.

AT THE present time the existence of Europe is threatened, first by the ideologies which sprang originally from the revolutionary idealism of the Western mind and its boundless faith in social progress, and secondly by the scientific technologies which were invented to serve the cause of life and which have been perverted to the service of destruction. But this is no longer a purely European problem; it has become a world-wide issue. If the ideological division of the world becomes permanent and complete, and if the new world powers employ all the resources of science and technology in the attempt to destroy one another, it is difficult to see how any civilization can survive anywhere. No doubt Europe would be the first to suffer, but the destruction of Europe would only be the prelude to the destruction of the world.

If, on the other hand, humanity decides not to commit suicide, and the new world powers achieve some kind of *modus vivendi* or balance of power which makes it possible for them to exist together, as the opposing religious forces in Western Europe managed to coexist after the wars of religion, then Europe will still hold a key position in the development of world culture. For Europe is the only cultural area in which all the ideologies meet, and it is the only culture which still maintains a living contact with the deeper spiritual traditions which underlie and transcend the ideologies.

The creators of the modern ideologies—Marx and Mazzini, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, St. Simon and Comte, Herzen and Proudhon—were all members of the same European society who shared a common background of Western humanist culture, whereas their spiritual descendants and heirs have spread abroad to the four corners of the world, where they are becoming progressively alienated from one another by the influence of the different cultural and racial environments with which they have been identified. Consequently it is in Europe, rather than in Asia or the Antipodes, that the criticism and revision of the ideologies can best be carried out and where they can be made intelligible to one another.

But this is possible only if Western culture retains its vital contact with the two great traditions of Christianity and humanism to which it owes its spiritual existence and its unique world-changing character. The survival of these traditions is far more important than that of European political and economic power, just as the survival of Hellenism was more important than that of the Roman Empire. Consequently, the greatest danger that threatens us is not the external threat to our political independence by the expansion of the new world empires, but the internal disintegration of Western culture by the ideologies which are anti-Christian or anti-humanist.

The fact that these ideologies have become completely identified with political parties, social regimes and military alliances makes them far more impervious to intellectual criticism than they were in their earlier formative phase. On the other hand, the same process which has increased their power has also diminished their spiritual appeal. When the ideologies represented the inner conviction and ideals of a revolutionary intelligentsia or a reformist elite, they aroused a similar psychological response to that of a religious sect. But now that they have become the dogmas of a police state, they have become part of the political organization that they serve.

Now if this situation is clearly recognized in Europe and if Western man agrees to confine the ideologies to their proper sphere and to treat them as alternative programs of social reform and political action, there is no reason why they should be irreconcilable with the traditions of Western culture. The danger comes from their invasion of the world of religion and metaphysics, so that they claim man's spiritual allegiance even in "the things that are not Caesar's." And they have succeeded in doing so because the spiritual tradition of Western culture had been undermined by that spirit of European nihilism which Nietzsche saw

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with such tragic intensity in the last century. This nihilism is a peculiarly European disease, a malady of the Western spirit which has extended its influence not only to Russia but also to America. Indeed, nowhere has it found clearer expression than in the writings of a modern American poet like Robinson Jeffers.

This particular development is very closely connected with the ideologies themselves and is a symptom not, as Nietzsche believed, of the mortal sickness of Christianity and humanism, but rather of the exhaustion of the revolutionary tradition itself. Neither Christianity nor humanism is dead. They still possess an infinite capacity of spiritual regeneration and cultural renaissance. What is passing away is the utopian idealism which was the original inspiration of all the revolutionary ideologies. Now that they have been brought down from the clouds to solid earth they have gained temporal power, but they have lost their old appeal. In so far as they continue to press their total claim to man's spiritual allegiance, they must inevitably drive civilization further and further toward nihilism and self-destruction.

The vital task for Europe at the present time is to resist this tendency and to recover and fortify the two great spiritual traditions which are the roots of its culture. This is a difficult task, and one which cannot be achieved without great moral and intellectual efforts. But it is by no means an impossible task, and since Europe was the original creator of the ideologies, she has a special responsibility and a special opportunity for finding a solution to the problems which the ideologies have raised.

"ABNORMAL AS NORM"

The Anomaly of Andre Gide

MARTIN TURNELL

ANDRÉ GIDE wrote so freely about himself, and drew so heavily on his personal experience in his fiction, that it seems almost paradoxical to speak of his "private life" at all. There was, however, a small area of his life which remained obscure, partly because he sometimes displayed an unexpected reticence, and partly because his insight into his own mental processes was in many ways surprisingly defective. Since his death, a number of books have appeared which throw fresh light on certain incidents in his career. They do not radically alter our conception of the man or the writer, but they do confirm inferences that at least some of his readers must have drawn from his published work. What I propose to do here is to give a brief résumé of his life, and to suggest a tentative explanation of his character.

Gide came on both sides from prosperous middle-class Protestant families. In 1880, when he was only eleven, his father died of intestinal tuberculosis. He was brought up by his mother, with whom he never got on well, and her former governess, Miss Anna Shackleton, to whom he was devoted. His early Protestant upbringing and his subsequent revolt against it formed the main drama of his life.

His first important emotional experience occurred when he was thirteen. He discovered his cousin, Madeleine Rondeaux, in tears because she had just learned of her mother's adultery, which was to break up the home. He tells us in his autobiography that she became "the mystic orientation of his life." The incident, indeed, marked the beginning of a curious spiritualized love for her on Gide's part. She was an extremely pious girl, and her piety led to a renewal of his own early religious fervor.

In 1893 and 1894 Gide traveled to North Africa where he spent several months. It was his first break with the Protestant home. It was also the beginning of moral emancipation, for it was in North Africa that he became aware of his sexual anomaly.

He had long been anxious to marry his cousin Madeleine. There was a good deal of opposition in the family to this marriage between first cousins, and Madeleine herself had refused him in 1891. The chief opposition, however, had come from Gide's mother. She died in the spring of 1895; in October of the same year the cousins were married. We know now that the husband refused to consummate the marriage. His reason, or rather his excuse, was that he did not know that women had sexual desires, and that he considered his spiritualized, disembodied love for his cousin a higher form of love.

Although there was no wedding night, there was a honeymoon which lasted six months. The itinerary was the same as for Gide's first voyage to North Africa,

---

Mr. Turnell, a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, is the author of *The Novel in France* and *Baudelaire*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but in reverse. The couple spent the autumn in Switzerland, the winter in Italy, and the spring in North Africa. It is significant that though Gide had just embarked officially on respectable married life, the real goal of his honeymoon was the country where he had sown his somewhat unorthodox wild oats. We do not know when his wife became aware of his proclivities, but there were incidents during the honeymoon which would have opened the eyes of almost any girl born a generation or two later.

On their return to France they went to live at Madeleine Gide's house at Cuverville-en-Caux in Normandy. It was to be not so much Gide's home as his permanent *base*—a base from which he set out on a hundred foreign journeys in search of adventure. Madeleine hated travel, and as the years went by Gide used increasingly to travel alone.

IT MUST be said in Gide's favor that he was discreet about his adventures, and that for many years he did his utmost to conceal them from his wife. In 1914 a passage from *Les Caves du Vatican* gave the secret away to Claudel. It was the end of a friendship.

Gide was exempt from military service on account of his health. When war broke out he did refugee work at the Foyer Franco-Belge. In 1916 there was some sort of dispute, and he left. In the spring of that year he found himself back at Cuverville with no war work to do, and was free to devote himself to his writing.

In the pre-war years his boon companion in his clandestine adventures had been Henri Ghéon, who was later to enjoy a considerable reputation as the author of religious plays and saints' lives. Ghéon was a doctor of medicine and had gone to the front as an army doctor. In the spring of 1916 he was converted to Catholicism. In May he wrote to Gide to announce his conversion, and bid him follow his example. He appears to have been one of those garrulous libertines who can hardly stop boasting about their exploits, and before the war he had been guilty of some indiscretions which had shocked even those of his friends who prided themselves on being "progressives." Although he expressed regret for them, he could not help recalling, in his conversion letter, some of their more scabrous exploits together in considerable detail. Madeleine Gide opened the letter and read it. It was an appalling shock to her, and led to the first serious breach between herself and her husband.

Ghéon's letter arrived at a time when Gide was passing through a major religious crisis and writing the conciliatory *Et numquid et tu . . . ?* In later years he used to say that he had been near to conversion at this time, but that he had been kept from the Church by the attitude of his Catholic friends. That is not strictly true. It was the incident of the letter and his wife's attitude of reprobation which was the beginning of an antagonism towards religion that ended in atheism.

In 1917 Gide formed an attachment for a young man named Marc Allégret, the son of a Protestant pastor who was a family friend. In the spring of 1918 when, incidentally, the fortunes of the Allies were at their lowest ebb and Paris was directly threatened by the enemy, Gide and Marc went to England on a four months' spree. Gide returned to Cuverville in October. In November he learned that, in a fit of despair which followed his departure for England, his wife had destroyed all the letters he had written to her in past years and which she had religiously preserved. He has told us that they contained the best of himself, that he spent a week by the fire weeping over their loss, and that he felt as though his wife had killed their child, which was not, under the circumstances, a very happy way of putting it.

In 1922 there was a meeting at Hyères, in the south of France, between Gide and a young woman named Élisabeth Van Rysselberghe, who was the daughter of his friends, Théo Van Rysselberghe, the painter, and Madame Van Rysselberghe. The following year Élisabeth bore Gide a daughter. It was the child for which his own wife had longed and which he had refused to give her. Once again we cannot tell whether Madeleine Gide knew. Gide thought that she had mysterious intuitions whenever he was up to mischief. She was at Cuverville at the time, but on the day of the meeting with Élisabeth she gave a friend certain presents of great sentimental value which she had received from her husband.

Since 1916 Gide had had the impression that his wife was deliberately trying to detach herself from him, that she was irrevocably "lost" to him. This had a dramatic effect on his own conduct. In an entry in his diary in 1917 he observes that throughout history the spiritual adventurer has always been held back by a woman who was "afraid." He goes on to imply that he himself should have pursued his goal whatever the consequences might have been for his wife. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is precisely what he did. In 1924 he published *Corydon,* a theoretical defense of his own peculiarity, and two years later he brought out an unexpurgated edition of *If it Die,* in which he not only recounted in the first person certain early exploits in North Africa, but gloried in them. The appearance of these two books made him notorious throughout Europe; their effect on his wife can only be a matter for painful speculation.

AFTER the death of Théo Van Rysselberghe in 1927 Gide spent a considerable part of each year living with the family—the widow, Élisabeth (who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was eventually married off to Pierre Herbart), and his own daughter. The Van Rysselberghes were strongly anti-religious. The inescapable conclusion is that this second home was a rival of the Protestant establishment at Cuverville.

Madeleine Gide died in 1938. Her husband was, naturally, "heartbroken," but this did not prevent him from writing *Et nunc manet in te,* in which he contrived to suggest that she was at least partly responsible for the failure of the marriage. In 1939 he was already showing the manuscript round to friends, including Mme. Théo Van Rysselberghe, who thought poorly of it. It was intended for posthumous publication but, as Martin du Gard remarks in his *Notes on André Gide,* Gide could never keep a manuscript in his drawer for very long. The book was first published in an edition of thirteen copies for the edification of close friends in 1947.

The testimony of Gide's friends shows that his treatment of his wife was not something isolated, but that it formed part of the pattern of his life. It is apparent from their books that in the sphere of personal relationships Gide instinctively sought to do harm, to disturb, to upset. Pierre Herbart, for example, tells us, in what purports to be a laudatory essay, that Gide was unreliable, that he did not understand the meaning of the word "promise," and that on one occasion he nearly wrecked the married life of a young acquaintance by betraying a confidence. We can also see from Claude Mauriac's memoir that Gide continually invited confidences and that under the guise of being helpful, he always contrived to make the upsetting, the disturbing remark—the remark which aggravated instead of alleviating anxiety.

The need to upset, to disturb and, finally, to destroy is the primary symptom of the psychopath. What I am suggesting is that Gide was in the strict medical sense a psychopathic case. If this view is correct, it makes nonsense of his much vaunted "sincerity," and necessarily modifies our estimate both of the man and the writer.

An author's imaginative work often tells us far more about his unconscious mental processes than set pieces of autobiography or diaries, which are written with an eye on the public and in which he strikes an attitude. This is undoubtedly true of Gide's fiction. In an article which appeared some years ago in The Commonweal I drew attention to the importance of *Le retour de l'enfant prodigue* for an understanding of his work, and remarked on the resemblance between the Prodigal and Gide himself. The thing that strikes me most forcibly about his career is the spectacle of the continual comings and goings between the Protestant home—first the home of his mother, then the home of his wife—and North Africa or some other country, is the conflict between a certain fear of religion and the lure of the moral freedom represented by Africa. The prodigal sets out in a guilty mood on some adventure. When it is over, he returns, half-repentant, to the Protestant fold which is Cuverville. He describes his feelings for his mother somewhere as a sort of "respectful hate." There can be little doubt that, psychologically, both his mother and his wife were incarnations of the Judge. If he felt a respectful hate for his mother, he felt something equally ambivalent for his wife. The choice of a female Judge, the substitution of a mother-figure for the father of the parable, is probably connected with his father's early death and his sexual anomaly, but speculation about that would be irrelevant here. We should also note the establishment of the second home with the Van Rysselberghes. It was a rival to the Protestant home certainly, but it was at the same time a compromise—a new and more friendly fold—the free-thinking fold.

THIS IS the situation that Gide presents in the best of his fiction. *The Immoralist, Strait is the Gate* and *The Pastoral Symphony* are all reflections of life in the Protestant fold, and there is no mistaking the resemblances between Gide and his wife and the protagonists. The salient facts about the three books is that, in each of them, the woman is sacrificed to the weakness or the depravity of the man who kills the thing he loves. Gide was always protesting against autobiographical interpretations of his fiction, but he made one very interesting comment. He said of *Strait is the Gate* that events confirmed what he had foreseen in the novel. The books are not autobiographical in the sense that they describe what had actually happened, but they do describe what might have happened, what the author wanted to happen, what in the last resort did happen. Although Madeleine Gide was over seventy when she died in 1938, her life had really come to an end years earlier. Gide had brought about her destruction in precisely the same way that the protagonists in the three *récits* destroy their partners. For Madeleine Gide, like Marceline in *The Immoralist,* was the normal wife who stood between the abnormal husband and the satisfaction of his desires. That is why the Prodigal kills the Judge.

Gide has told us in his diary that *The Counterfeiters* was the first of his books in which he tried to leave his wife out of account. It was the product of a different situation and introduces a variation into the usual pattern. It originated in a personal quarrel between Gide and Cocteau over Marc Allégret which developed into a struggle between the two men for the intellectual allegiance of French youth. It will be remembered that the principal theme of the novel is the contrast between the "authentic" and the "counterfeit" being. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

struggle between Gide and Cocteau is transposed in the novel into the struggle between Édouard and Passavant, between the "authentic" and the "counterfeit" novelist, for Édouard's nephew Olivier, and closes—not altogether surprisingly—with the triumph of Édouard. The book was published in 1925, two years before Gide set up house with the Van Rysselberghes. This almost certainly accounts for two other important facts about it. The first is that though Gide attacks Protestantism even more vehemently than in any of his earlier works, he has clearly made his escape from the Protestant fold and is writing about it from outside. The second is that though Édouard and Laura are portraits of Gide and Madeleine, *they are not husband and wife*. For in spite of the fact that Gide tried to leave his wife out of account in writing *The Counterfeiters,* he could not avoid putting her into the book, but in doing so he took good care to deprive her of the position—her status as wife—which gave her the right to interfere with his pleasures.

"I had found my own form of normality," he wrote in the course of an account of one of his African adventures. It is a very damaging admission which draws attention to the fundamental weakness of all his fiction. He was continually trying to set up the abnormal as the norm, to argue that the exception was natural. It is the presence of an abnormal element, which was the consequence of his psychopathic condition, that prevents even the three *récits* from possessing the universal validity of truly great art. It also explains why in the last analysis Gide was a very distinguished man of letters rather than a great writer.

TWO TRADITIONS

The War Novel

WILLIAM J. SMITH

IT WAS a curiously prevalent conviction at the close of World War II that the era of the war novel was past. The presumptive rationale of this conviction was that mankind was now truly sickened of blood and was prepared to devote its literary leisure to Ivy Compton-Burnett and Angela Thirkell, depending upon one's highbrow or lowbrow inclinations. The folly of the plowshares view was soon evident, and for a decade now the war novel has been the backbone of the best seller list. The bosomy romances and the drawing-room ladies were not displaced, to be sure, but mankind had not lost its taste for carnage. Blood and guts have been a staple of fiction since the *Iliad* and it is not likely that they will go out of fashion in the near future.

Oddly enough, considering the attraction of gore, the war novel, per se, is a mere infant in the literary field. It is no doubt symptomatic of our times that the war novel has become a distinctive genre in our fiction. It was born, let us say for the sake of starting an argument, with Barbusse's *Le Feu* in 1916, and came to America in 1921 with Dos Passos' *Three Soldiers*. Before that time there was, of course, the Old Adam of them all, *War and Peace,* and there was Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*. These two prototypes, whether by direct influence, or by the exigencies of the creative impulse, set the patterns for the subsequent efflorescence in the field—War as History, and War as Psychological Catalyst; War as Societal Dialectic and War as Personal Experience.

There is, of course, no hard and fast line between these two types, the War-and-Peace Department and the Red-Badge Department. The latter may exist in relative purity only at the loss of something in the magnitude of the work, and the former cannot exist purely by the simple demands of the craft.

NOT surprisingly, considering the generally anti-intellectual tinge of the American novel, the native novelist has tended to see war in purely personal terms and admit history to his pages only as remotest implication. Even more typically, the American novelist has substituted irony in the place of analysis. Hemingway is representative though by no means unique. This is not to say that the Americans have not produced superbly moving and excellently fashioned war novels. Hemingway is again an example by no means unique.

The differences between the European war novel, which is oftener in the War-and-Peace tradition, and the American counterpart go back themselves to historical circumstances. Even the irony of the victors is by no means the same as the irony of the defeated.

Mr. Smith, a free-lance writer and editor, appears frequently in these pages.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And the need for analysis lies heavier on the hearts of the humbled than on those of the triumphant, however bitterly triumphant they may be. No European nation came through the last conflict completely undefeated, and the burden of the defeat is reflected in the need for a closer searching of the machinery of society that has brought them—France, Germany, England, Italy—to their present state.

America (for better or worse) has produced none of the chronicle novelists of France (Romains, et al.), who attempt to abstract a meaningful pattern from the chaos of the twentieth century's sprawling violence. America has produced nothing like the hysterical laughter of Malaparte or the nihilistic horror of Jean Genet (as in *Pompes Funebres*) or the disdainful elegance of Evelyn Waugh. Even the quality of American war humor is distinctively different from its European counterparts—compare *Mister Roberts* or *No Time for Sergeants* with *The Good Soldier Schweik* or *The Revolt of Gunner Asch.*

All in all, the American war novelist's gesture toward history has been tentative and uncertain. We have Dos Passos, perhaps, or Faulkner. Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions* made an attempt of sorts. Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* succeeded better with less obvious intent—and succeeded, regardless of its category, in being the best novel of World War II, capturing in imaginative grasp of personality the illusion at least of historical force. For the history of fiction is not the history of the real world. It is the history of another world, but one to which we feel the tie.

American novelists, in any event, have made little pretense of capturing or presenting historical significances. (Moral significances, of course, are an entirely different matter.) For the most part the brooding, complex second lieutenant, who speaks for history in the American war novel by his recollection of Humanities 2A at the University of Chicago, gives precedence in American fiction to the Sad Sack, who broods only about the availability of the native wenches and whose sense of history does not penetrate further back than Roosevelt's election to a third term. We are all much too liberalized in this day and age to feel any scorn for the Sad Sack as a person, except as we may have felt scorn for ourselves in our own Sad Sack days, but the artist who attempts to make a hero of his favorite PFC is working under a considerable technical handicap. A man who doesn't know where he is, or why, or what he is supposed to do next, or what he thinks about any of it, is not the stuff heroes are made of, however dear he may be in the eye of God and the politician. Pity is a tedious emotion to sustain, and contempt is fatal. (In this connection, it is curious that the airmen, those manufactured-to-order heroes, have fared so poorly outside of made-for-Hollywood novels. Surely they deserve their Tolstoy. But perhaps the airborne mind is not usually an introspective one.)

The solution to the problem of the Hero as Little Man is the Red-Badge Department—the personal courage and the psychological realness of his hero. The best of the war novels show that mere action is not enough. We may legitimately ask of our hero, as Melville did of another sort of man, "How fares he in solitude? . . . Shall a peach refresh him? The effervescence of champagne, with what eye does he behold it? Is summer good to him? Of long winters how much can he sleep? What are his dreams? How feels he, and what does he, when suddenly awakened, alone, at dead of night, by fusillades of thunder?" The inscrutabilities of intrinsic story interest aside, the success or failure of the war novel depends, in large measure, on the author's capacity to project his warrior hero.

THE TWENTIETH century has seen the development of a number of novelistic subdivisions—science fiction, the Western, the detective story, the war novel. These pseudo-genres blossomed out suddenly, and almost simultaneously, as though the weight of the Victorian prototype had at last become too heavy to carry. *Dombey and Son* split at the seams and the parts went running off, like so many midgets, in every direction. H. G. Wells, Zane Grey, Conan Doyle, and Stephen Crane joined hands, murmured an incantation, and gave birth to their respective mutations. The "family novel" was no more, the age of specialization had set in. Soap-opera for the ladies, Wild West for cigarette-smoking youths, science fiction for math majors, and detective stories, with forty-three subcategories, for everyone. Each category jerry-rigged its conventions and they have, with little adjustments, held together ever since.

Only the war novel resisted complete regimentation. The reasons for this are obvious. Few authors wrote more than one war novel; they were based on real and unique experience; and the intrinsic seriousness of the subject matter discouraged the sort of flippancy that goes with complete stylization. The never-never-land of story-book murder or cattle rustling or positronic brains could be kidded, but the world of mass annihilation resisted the tendency. This may be said to be the twentieth century's triumph of the human spirit.

Nevertheless, the war novel is not without its conventions, or, rather, its conventional attitudes. Until the outbreak of World War II these attitudes were heavy irony and poignant futility, marked, as a rule, by a strong tone of pacifism, however swashbuckling the hero may have been. Everyone was at least in verbal agreement that World War I was, at best, a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tragic error, and, at worst, an expression of the innate diabolism of man.

A novel of William March, *Company K* (now available, after long obscurity, in a paperback edition and in the Rinehart *William March Omnibus*), is typical of this horror-stricken attitude of revulsion, complete and unqualified. Representative of the "humor" of the work is the slaughter of an affectionate fawn by a ravenous soldier. *Company K* is not a great novel, if only for the convenient reason that it is not a novel at all but, rather, a series of vignettes of war. The longest of these kaleidoscopic bits runs a mere five or six pages, the shortest only a few lines. Characterization of the hundred and more individuals who tell their little tales is minimal or non-existent and the voice of the author is heard incongruously intruding itself. The central incident of the book, moreover, which concerns itself with the murder of a group of defenseless prisoners of war, palls in the light of subsequent atrocities which man has managed to dream up. And the vision of Christ in the trenches is embarrassing rather than moving.

Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of *Company K* is stirring and compassionate. The simplest incidents are often the most effective. March's attack on the Sad Sack Problem was to multiply it a hundredfold, and yet he succeeded, perhaps through the audacity of it, in creating a moving work. But the success was due more to the patent sincerity of the author than to any real genius at creating that "other" world of fiction. The triumph over odds is impressive.

NO ONE, on the other hand, has been quite willing to admit that World War II was quite the futile and meaningless cruel holocaust that World War I seemed to be. The attitudes of the war novel have changed accordingly, if not to the glorification of war at least to the glorification of the brave men who fought it. *From Here to Eternity* glorifies the army as a stern but righteous father. *The Caine Mutiny* glorifies the larger exigencies of the cause over the individual, *Mister Roberts* glorifies the unsung heroes of the backwashes of the war, *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* the flying heroes of Korea. Unrelieved cynicism and out-and-out pacifism are things of the past and sales have zoomed. Even as bitterly an antiwar novel as *The Naked and the Dead* is not in the same polemically bitter vein of, say, *Three Soldiers*. The unobtrusively symbolic bees that defeat Mailer's brave men is nature reasserting itself against outrage. And the symbol is not without hope, though neither good nor evil of itself.

Two of the most recent American war novels—Thomas Anderson's *Your Own Beloved Sons* and William Hoffman's *The Trumpet Unblown*—suggest what the genre may become if it truly goes the way of the detective story and establishes its own inviolate conventions to isolate it from any larger reality. Both books belong to the Red-Badge Department, of course. Mr. Anderson's war, to deal with it first, is as pure of historical implication as the latest Agatha Christie thriller, say, is of the implication of death. It is war *in vacuo*. It is war completely unsullied by the touch of thought. *Your Beloved Sons* is ostensibly about the Korean War but, *mutatis mutandis*, it could do for any. A little change of landscape and military equipment would do it. The novel is a purely self-contained story of the work of soldiers and their courage and fears and triumps and defeats. It is a tale of the mechanics of war and its representative personnel. And it is a very good book for all its limitations.

The author of *Your Own Beloved Sons* is a young Danish-American of whom it is said, perhaps with some hyperbole, that he came to the English language familiarly only when he joined the United States Army in 1948. Anderson has an extraordinary feel for the language and bears, in his curiously odd felicity of phrase, a real resemblance to Conrad. There are other hints of resemblance—something of Conrad's sensuous appeal and the tense driving force of his narrative. And there is, too, about Mr. Anderson's characters a little of the same unknown, mysterious quality that gives his people a third dimension, and animates them from within, gives them a little of that radiance that suffuses the creatures of Conrad.

This is not to say that *Your Own Beloved Sons* is worthy of Conrad. The work has its shortcomings (the title, to begin with) other than its utter intellectual naiveté. Its central character, Sergeant Stanley, is a wildly idealized soldier-hero who perversely selects a group of misfits to accompany him on a dangerous patrol, determined to make good soldiers of them. Imagine this situation in a serious war novel before 1945! Their odyssey through the bleak and fearful wastes of the Korean winter is excitingly told, and with an economy remarkable in a young novelist. One is tempted to laugh at Sergeant Stanley in the way one is tempted to laugh at Humphrey Bogart beating up the bad guys, but his strange end makes one pause, not merely out of respect for the sincerity of the portraiture, since sincerity is the essence of the war novel, but for a dim suggestion of a greater complexity of character than the author succeeded in conveying. There is no question of any subtle interpretations involved. The author means exactly what he says and it has never occurred to him that he is saying things that are appalling. But the book remains tantalizing and one hopes that Mr. Anderson will extend his range.

In a perverse sense the hero of Mr. Hoffman's novel, *The Trumpet Unblown*, is more real than characters in vastly superior works. Shelby is real in the sense that your own letters home from the wars represent

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a real character who actually existed. The only difficulty is that Shelby does not exist fictionally. He is not in that "other" world of fiction. The book is a document. And after a time (if you continue to read this sort of chronicle with interest, as I do) you come to resent the obviously fictional intrusions into the texture of the memoir—the drearily hoked-up comedy of the sergeant who is a big-time operator, and the rest of the gallery of types who are supposed to liven the novel. The principal value of this book is that it suggests another direction in which the conventionalized war novel could move—toward real memoirs, fictionalized only to the extent of avoiding libel suits, and with no attempt at artistically imposed form. The generals have led the way. It is only for their men to follow.

ALL IN all, it does not seem likely that the war novel will become the packaged product that we might fear. The worst have redeeming qualities at least of verisimilitude and liveliness of action. And until we run out of wars we will undoubtedly have them in increasing numbers. Every time a draft call for 23,000 men goes out 23,000 potential war novels flicker tentatively into existence. War used to come, occasionally, to the artist. In these days of citizen-armies the artist goes to war. He goes young and comes from it, often, with war his one important circumstantial experience. And he comes back from it, if return he does, at the beginning of his career, with the material of his first manly venture still burning in his mind. His experience has its own intrinsic importance and its own fund of indignations and violences and loves. War is his entree into literature. His real problem is, What next? If his book is a success he is a professional writer and his experience of the extra-literary world is done before it has begun. Subsequent material he acquires from which to weld his fiction may very well seem to be emotionally inferior.

The detective story writer, after all, can dream up a murder a day but the war novel, unless it degenerates to a mere adventure story, is a one-shot affair. Perhaps one solution is the extended chronicle of war and peace in the manner of the gargantuan French novels. Or perhaps a gentleman's agreement should be imposed requiring the novelist to publish another novel first, saving his war novel for later in his career when he can benefit from the experience of his craft. The ruling might be double-edged, denying us the good as it spared us the bad, but it would work to the theoretical advantage of everyone. For "War makes rattling good history," as Hardy said, "but Peace makes poor reading." But lacking any such utopian device we can only hope for the best and be thankful for the many good war novels we do get.

THE STAGE

DISSENT

I AM vexed and baffled at having to pass so harsh a judgment on two theatrical occasions which have drawn, elsewhere, a distinguished press. The first of these is Mr. Norman Rosten's arrangement for the stage of Mr. Joyce Cary's novel of British colonial life, "Mister Johnson" (*at the Martin Beck*). Mr. Cary's subject here (to which he doubtless brings his adroit vigor—I have not read the novel) is the destructive impact of an ideal of civilization on an ingenuous African native who sees only its graces, and not the inflexible moral structure which sustains these, and against which his own pragmatic ethical sensibility is pathetically broken. The vision has a masculine potency and directness, yet it is rich in oblique glints and refractions, passages of the most tenderly wrought social comedy—the encounter of a colonial British lady and the native clerk's quite intransigently tribal wife is one of the most telling of these. Mr. Rosten translates such episodes to the stage with tact and pungency, yet essentially his play is but a sequence of portraiture; its texture is vague and diffuse, the trajectory of its animating action feeble. One wonders how much melancholy evidence will be required to prove the difference *in kind* of the narrative and dramatic sensibilities. Those novels which "adapt" to the stage do so by permitting themselves to be transformed into something else again—usually picturesque fantasies ("The Teahouse," "No Time for Sergeants") or melodramas of sentiment and morality ("The Bad Seed," "The Ponder Heart"). It is axiomatic that the more absolute the novel, the more vigorously will it resist restatement in other terms; one has only to recall the gutted horror of last season's dramatization of "Portrait of a Lady."

Possibly sensing this lack of substance, Miss Cheryl Crawford has lavishly invited Miss Pearl Primus to color the evening with several of her (one assumes) anthropologically correct ritual dances. These have a certain rather hygienic interest, though never can they dispel that ominous implication of the travel folder: "native ceremonies will be arranged" etc. Mr. Earle Hyman plays the doomed fugitive from the bush, caught in the backwash of these two inexorably turning worlds, with plucky charm and great sweetness of spirit. No one who has seen Mr. Hyman's various performances in Shakespeare will doubt the power and authority of his talent, little of which, sadly, is called into play here. Except in the drama's final (and most touching) sequence, Mr. Hyman is required to register nothing more than an engaging but persistent and ultimately fatiguing sunniness.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OF MUCH deeper consequence is Turgenev's single play, that idyllic pastoral of the ironies of passion, "A Month in the Country" (*at the Phoenix*). The piece has, perhaps, a certain delicacy of form, a gentle, unstressed lucidity of spiritual perception, but amid the clamor of praise which has greeted its production at the Phoenix, am I alone in finding the whole thing quite insufferably tedious? The novelist's play has its place, most honorably, in the theater, but "A Month in the Country" nowhere permits Turgenev as dramatist to explore those particular areas of strength and grace in which his fiction excels: he cannot blend landscape and sentiment with such evocative power as he does in *First Love* and *On the Eve,* and those finely etched moral discriminations which give *Rudin* or *Fathers and Sons* their perfection of modeling are here coarsened by the strident pressures of theatrical convention. The play seems to me at the last insular and dilettante: one is conscious always of Turgenev dramatizing the familial relations of Mme. Pauline Viardot's curious household, of which, for so many years, he was so abject a member.

Mr. Michael Redgrave's production does not soften the play's *gaucherie*. In character portraiture, he seeks to establish a bold Dickensian profile, and not that fluency of line which might have harmonized its many angularities. (Stanislavsky, one recalls, praised the play for being "built on the most delicate curves of love experience.") The secondary roles are played in that distressing melange of styles which is a feature of production at the Phoenix, though Mr. Luther Adler creates his eccentric with energy and wit. Those critics who have praised without reservation Miss Uta Hagen's performance, however, are doing no service to this distinguished actress. Miss Hagen is too intelligent an artist not to know that the tragic muse must be invited and invoked; she may come capriciously, or she may not come at all. Certainly she will not be captured by the kind of frontal assault Miss Hagen makes in this play, in which her acting is slushy and assertive, physically over-blown and vocally flawed by that fruity sonority into which the actress has unaccountably lapsed. Miss Hagen is potentially our only actress in the great continental tradition, and one hopes urgently that she will return soon to her particular area of power, which is the fine, delicate thing. Achieving that, she may happily discover that nobility and grandeur follow invisibly in its wake.

(*A Note*: Mr. Samuel Beckett's celebrated "Waiting for Godot" is at the John Golden Theater at least until May 12th. I must defer until next week a discussion of this play, which distills out of its vaudeville humors and bleak philosophic extremity a poetry of tender desolation unique in the current theater.)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

POOR BUTTERFLY

SINCE THE singing and acting parts of a movie are not done at the same time, it is surprising that no one came up earlier with the bright idea that makes the new production of "Madame Butterfly" so successful. The Italians and Japanese got together for this handsome production which was filmed in Italy with authentic Japanese sets and a Japanese cast acting all the roles except those of the Americans. The singing in this Puccini opera is done by Italians whom we do not see, except for Ferdinando Lidonni, the only one in the cast who both sings and acts a role—that of the American consul. As Cio Cio San, Kaoru Yachigusa is incredibly lovely; and the sweet-sad, turn-of-the-century story of the geisha girl who falls in love with Lieutenant Pinkerton and marries him, only to be disowned by the family of her ancestors and then deserted by the lieutenant after six months of happiness, is made particularly touching through Miss Yachigusa's delicacy and charm and the very fine singing of Oriette Moscucci. As the great American cad, Pinkerton, Nicola Filacuridi gives a convincing performance that is enlivened by the voice of Giuseppe Campora.

For my money, this "Madame Butterfly" is the best opera-into-movie made so far. Usually an opera plot, depending as it does on the music, doesn't work out well in cinema technique with its close-ups and need for movement. But in this case, Director Carmine Gallone, except in a few scenes with long arias, manages to keep the shots moving along at a fluid pace. The beautiful photography, handled by Claude Renoir, the stunning Technicolor and the Puccini score blend perfectly to make a rich cinematic experience. Few changes were made in the original opera (a prologue using the Takarazuka Kabuki Dance Troupe in a tea house setting shows Cio Cio San meeting Pinkerton for the first time) so this "Madame Butterfly," with an English narration that explains the action from time to time, should please both opera and movie fans.

DISAPPOINTING is the word for Jean Renoir's new picture, the first that he has made in France in thirteen years. After his success with such thoughtful films as "The Southerner" (United States), "The River" (India), "The Golden Coach" (Italy) and his earlier French "Grand Illusion," one had a right to expect great things of Renoir when he returned to his native land. "French-Cancan" has little of greatness about it. Except for certain scenes that have the same quality of gaiety that pervades the paintings of the director's famous father and of Toulouse-Lautrec, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some lovely Technicolor effects and flashes of music-hall atmosphere with Edith Piaf or Patachou singing, "French-Cancan" is on the whole rather dull. Renoir tells the story of Danglard (Jean Gabin), who started the celebrated Moulin Rouge (where the Cancan was first danced as a spectacular entertainment) as if he were making a Hollywood musical, and he even crowds his picture with old movie cliches that Hollywood has already worn out and discarded. The sketchy plot is confused and too obviously a success story that will end up with a big and elaborate production number. It does; but in the meantime Gabin walks somewhat phlegmatically through the lead role while his success as a producer and lover is phenomenal. As a couple of girls on his long list, Francoise Arnoul and Maria Felix exhibit much more enthusiasm. No doubt much of the failure of "French-Cancan" is due to the American print's being cut so drastically; the film still has its artistic moments, but it gives the impression of straining more for sensationalism than for artistry.

WHILE the Europeans are turning up with elaborate productions in gorgeous Technicolor, Hollywood pops up with a little black-and-white film that might have been made abroad in the less spectacular days. Heavy with symbolism and allegorical overtones, "The Bold and the Brave" is a war film that isn't about war, but about the battle within a man that is sometimes bigger than the war. Its original screenplay by Robert Lewin has a universal quality. The story is that of three American buddies: a sergeant (Don Taylor) who sees evil everywhere and feels it his duty to root it out; a private (Wendell Corey) who has a rich wife and is convinced of his own cowardice and failure as a man; and another private (Mickey Rooney) who has an overwhelming desire for money so he can start a restaurant in New Jersey. While on a pass in a small Italian village, the two privates play a dirty trick on their naive sergeant: they pay a prostitute (Nicole Maurey) to pursue Don. Then fate plays a dirty trick on all concerned: the Italian girl and the Midwestern American boy fall genuinely in love, both for the first time. When unforgiving Don learns the truth, he is overwhelmed with disgust, loathing and bitterness.

Although the film's big scene in which Don leads his men on a reconnaissance is overdone, the picture as a whole never loses it appeal or interest. Lewis R. Foster has directed his cast magnificently, and his characters manage to be real people as they reveal what the script is saying about bravery, cowardice and man's inhumanity toward man. Surrounded by a cast that is practically perfect, Mickey Rooney outdoes himself in another of his first-rate performances.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE TRANQUIL SURFACE"

Decatur, Georgia

TO the Editors: Over the several years that I have been reading your editorials I have come to expect an honest, realistic approach to current problems. Time and again I have seen and applauded your refusal to take over-simplified attitudes in the face of complex situations. You have insisted that, although a general principle may be crystal clear in the abstract, its practical application to an involved political or social issue may be quite the opposite. In this day of slogan-statesmanship, when the dubious practices of the high-powered advertising media are applied wholesale to delicate problems of vital, far-reaching importance, your attitude has always struck me as a healthy and refreshing one.

For this reason I was disappointed by your editorial "The Tranquil Surface" in the April 13 issue. To group all those who differ with the *tactics* of the NAACP into one group and brand them via Father Dunne as "fatuous . . . complacently acquiescent in evil . . . silent in the face of the betrayal of Christianity" is unfair and sloppy thinking.

The relationship of the races in the South would be at best a complex matter. The history of the South for the past one hundred years has kept the situation far from being at its best. The least that can be asked of the honest outside critic is a little humble confusion and an acknowledgement that what seems prudent in New York may not be prudent at all in Alabama and Georgia. Editorials like "The Tranquil Surface" offer no help whatever to those who love the South and want to help it. Indeed, they offer no real help to anyone.

(*Rev.*) LEONARD F. X. MAYHEW.

"THE 'POOR SOD' AS HERO"

Nashville, Tennessee

TO the Editors: I have just read with great interest Mr. Sam Hynes' essay on the "Poor Sod" novelists of post-war Britain [April 13]. He is, I believe, the first American critic to put his finger on an unexpected, but significant, turn in modern fiction; where it will lead, no one can know. I should like to point out that one small error in his essay can be happily accounted for: Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* has been published over here, at least two years ago. I reviewed it in *Shenandoah* at that time, and Arthur Mizener reviewed it in the *Sewanee Review* last year. Indeed, Mr. Mizener and the editor of *Shenandoah* have since then done some extremely valuable textual criticism on one passage in *Jim* (*Sewanee,* Autumn, '55). . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FIVE DEVILS of KILMAINHAM

by ESTHER MORGAN McCULLOUGH

"a masterpiece of suspense"—*Detroit News*

"The warmth and richness of Irish character permeates it"—*The Irish Catholic*, Dublin

"It belongs in the same genre that Mauriac and Graham Greene invented: the Mystery with a capital M."—Donald Demarest, *The News*, Mexico City

$3.75

TORERO: *A Bullfighter's Day*

text by ENRIQUE GUAL photos by The MAYOS

"The art of tauromachy, producing so many aficionados these days in Texas, is magnificently photographed and textually presented in Torero: *A Bullfighter's Day*."—*Dallas News* $3.75

THE GOLDEN ANGEL: *Essays on Proust*

by ELLIOTT COLEMAN

A most important study of Proust's life work, a key to his thought and art through his religious symbolism.

"The excellence of Mr. Coleman's interpretative studies recommends *The Golden Angel* to all students of modern literature."—R. F. Grady, S. J. in *Best Sellers* $3.50

COLEY TAYLOR, INC., Freeport, Maine

Back In Stock

THE

Commonweal TREASURY

A paper-cover book, 128 pages, containing selections from The Commonweal Reader, which was published by Harper in 1949 at $3.50:

Merton — Cogley — Williams — Paulding — de Menasce
Vaughan — Reinhold — Shuster — White — Stern
Bernanos — Maritain — Dunne — Berdyaev — King

With an introduction, "What Is The Commonweal" by the Editors

$1 postpaid

N.Y.C. residents enclose 3¢ stamp for each copy to cover Sales Tax.

BOOK SERVICE DEPARTMENT

The Commonweal

386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

CAMP WE-HA-KEE On Green Bay Marinette, Wisconsin

For Girls 6-16

Conducted by Dominican Sisters, Sinsinawa, Wis.
1956 Season June 26—August 14, $350

For information write

Sister David O'Leary, 200 Ridge Ave., Winnetka, Ill.

A much better novel in this genre is Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net* (published here by Viking in 1954). Miss Murdoch's hero is also Poor Sod, but at her touch the gritty surfaces of modern society are transmuted into a kind of dream-texture. She can go beyond the picaresque to establish the true artifact. . . .

DANIEL CHAUCER.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Mr. Sam Hynes' very interesting piece on "The 'Poor Sod' As Hero," contains one misstatement of fact I would like to correct and one omission I would like to rectify.

The fact is that *Lucky Jim,* by Kingsley Amis, was published by Doubleday in 1954. It was reviewed well, promoted earnestly, sold modestly, and is now out of print. The omission is the overlooking of the books of William Cooper. In his *Scenes from Provincial Life* (published in England by Cape and not published in this country) and *The Struggles of Albert Woods,* (also published here by Doubleday), Cooper, a friend and literary disciple of C. P. Snow, wrote two fine and funny examples of the new English fiction which both anticipated the novels of Amis and John Wain and almost surely influenced them.

PYKE JOHNSON, JR.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: There were a few points in Mr. Sam Hynes' interesting article, "The 'Poor Sod' as Hero," which I feel require some measure of refutation. Firstly, this matter of "generations": I, for one, find Mr. Hynes' picture of a group of English Post-War critics huddled around a still typewriter waiting for the Post-War Generation to produce the Post-War Novel, more than slightly comic. Certainly critics would be unemployed if there were no novels, and, as Mr. Hynes' article suggests, it is always easier if one can assume the existence of a "Movement" or "Generation." But to what common "Generation" do D. H. Lawrence, Wyndham Lewis, George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh belong? As for "intellectual climates"! Everyone knows the only tangible climate in England is a very physical one; the rest is all *Zeitgeist,* phooey, or continental.

Even if one were to admit the existence of such things, which for the life of me I'd rather not, the generation that grew up after the Second World War would show a difference that is in some way reflected in literary expression: I mean that the last war forced fathers and sons closer together in England rather than further apart. Generally speaking, we share the same views and the same doubts. If we were old enough we joined our recently demobilized parents in voting in the Labor Government in 1945. What is perhaps new, and Mr. Hynes lights on it, is the intro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

duction of the lower-middle class into the forefront of literature in a semi-welfare state.

Otherwise, what is novel here? The problem, as Mr. Hynes well states it, remains very similar to that of the thirties: "The search for values by which to live and act, and the struggles to make one's values in some minute way effective." But then this has been the problem most of the great novelists have faced in one way or another. And is the Hero different? Maybe we look at ourselves from a more humorous perspective these days, but this is nothing particularly new in English fiction. Unlike the French and the Americans we have lacked Heroes for some time now.

I would question Mr. Hynes' statement that Messrs. Amis, Wain, Newby etc., are the only important novelists in England writing about their own time. We have no one who is truly *engagé*. But a complete disregard for Mr. Graham Greene, Mr. L. P. Hartley, and Mr. Anthony Powell—not to mention the two living authors I referred to in my first paragraph—is either indicative of ignorance of their work or of a curious sense of what is "important" in modern English letters. For one thing, Mr. Amis has learnt a lot from Mr. Powell—especially that farcical, improbable side of human experience Mr. Hynes considers the Poor Sod Men to have only now "restored to the English novel." There is also a transvestite scene in *From a View to a Death*, Anthony Powell's brilliant comedy of manners first published in 1935. The central character of that novel has much in common with Jim Dixon and John Lewis.

ANTHONY BAILEY.

A REPLY

Swarthmore, Pa.

TO the Editors: I had not thought that the Poor Sod would stir anyone to the point of writing to the editor. The first two letters require no comment; I obviously made a mistake re *Lucky Jim*, I chose not to include Iris Murdoch, and I have never heard of William Cooper.

As to Mr. Bailey, he largely answers himself, first denying the existence of an "intellectual climate," and then defining it, asking "what is novel here?" and then telling us. He complains that I either haven't read or can't appreciate Greene, Hartley and Powell, since I don't mention them; but evidently I have read them rather more closely than he has, if he is seriously asserting that they belong with novelists who write about the "post-war, Welfare-state world" (the quote is mine). The matter could be argued at length, I suppose, but there does not seem to be much point.

SAM HYNES.

In Retreat with the Sacred Heart
By François Charmot, S.J., trans. by Sister Maria Constance—A unique book of meditations in the format of verse, strophe, and dialogue, patterned somewhat after the manner of the psalms in order to facilitate spiritual reflection. May 30 $3.00

The Exercises of St. Gertrude
Trans. and edited by a Benedictine Nun of Regina Laudis—Prayers and reflections drawn up by the great St. Gertrude for the use of her Sisters and intended to cover a week of spiritual exercises. May 30 $3.00

The Cruise of the Nona
By Hilaire Belloc, a new Edition with an Introduction by Lord Stanley of Alderley—This book will "stand as Belloc's memorial. He could have no better; for in writing it he has left to all his old friends . . . the essence of himself." June 15 $3.75

Inward Peace
By Raoul Plus, S.J.—After defining the meaning of inward peace the author considers the nature and source of peace of soul, the threats that encompass it, and the methods necessary to its achievement. $3.00

NEW BOOKS FOR SPRING READING

Officium Parvum B. Mariae Virginis
Revised by Augustine Bea, S.J.—The new official, Latin edition of The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary approved by Pope Pius XII for use by religious congregations and sodalities. $2.75

A Retreat with Our Lady
By Ch. Polloi—A study of the theological and cardinal virtues as exemplified in the life of Our Lady. $1.50

Soul of Christ
Meditations on the Anima Christi
By John H. Collins, S.J.—An application of the celebrated Ignatian second method of prayer to the Anima Christi. $2.50

Jesus the Saviour
By Father James, O.F.M.Cap.—An incisive treatment of the inner significance of the principal events in the life of our Lord. $2.50

Franco of Spain
By S.F.A. Coles—A new biography of General Franco written by a leading British political reporter and set against the backdrop of Spain's many complexities. June 1 $4.00

A Little Learning
By Walter J. Handren, S.J.—A useful handbook for college students dealing with the proper environment, philosophy, and technique of study, and laying down those principles that assure success in college work. June 8 $3.50

The Blessed Sacrament and the Mass
By St. Thomas Aquinas, trans. with notes by Rev. F. O'Neill—Gleaned from the monumental Summa Theologica of St. Thomas, these selections provide in handy, compact form the teaching of the Angelic Doctor on the Eucharist and the Mass. $2.75

National Patriotism in Papal Teaching
By Most Rev. John J. Wright—Recently reprinted, this book "faces squarely the involved tangle of bad history, bad philosophy, and bad theology which is modern nationalism, and unravels it not only satisfactorily but triumphantly."—America $4.50

Wherever Good Books are Sold
THE NEWMAN PRESS
WESTMINSTER
MARYLAND

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Power in the Third Age of the Middle Earth

THE LORD OF THE RINGS. III Vols.: The Fellowship of the Ring; The Two Towers; The Return of the King. By J. R. R. Tolkien. Houghton Mifflin Company. $5 per vol.

By ANTHONY BAILEY

PROFESSOR TOLKIEN'S trilogy is not a great epic, as some have called it, though it does have some epic qualities: a certain imaginative stature, a considerable creative eloquence. In the main it is a story about power, its use and misuse; the theme of the book couldn't be better summarized than by Acton's famous phrase. Professor Tolkien has invented an era in which the action takes place: the Third Age of Middle Earth; he has invented a land also, with various countries and landscapes (there are maps to help the reader follow the terrain, its cities and rivers, etc.); and he has created numerous characters of different races: Ents, Elves, Dwarves, Men, Hobbits, Orcs, and Nazgul. The Hobbits are a bright, undergraduate kind of people, small, pert and shrewd. They are the heroes of the book, although, like Stendhal's Fabricio at Waterloo, generally they do not recognize the significance of the events they are caught up in. One of them, Frodo, is a little more aware of his role: it is his mission to carry the One Ring into Mordor, the land of Evil, Sauron's kingdom, and there destroy it in the fires of Mt. Doom. Of course this is a very perilous journey. Not only does Sauron want back the ring in order to aid his war against the Forces of Good, but some leaders of the Forces of Good would also like it, to help them defeat Sauron. Yet such is the power of the Ring that Gandalf, a rather intangible wizard, agrees with some of the wise elves that it were best to destroy the Ring, once and for all, even though it may mean their own doom in the attempt. So Frodo is the Ring-Bearer and with him goes Sam Gamgee, his friend and servant.

This is the gist of the story, and I hope to have made some of its weaknesses apparent, as well as some of its possibilities. First of all, the whole treatment is black and white: my chief complaint is that there is no grey in it. This is one reason why *The Lord of the Rings* never approaches *Alice in Wonderland* or Malory; after a while one longs for a relationship with some complexity, but there are here no Lancelots nor Guineveres. What complexity it has is largely a matter of the numerous strands of plot—there are several adventures going on at once, parallel to Frodo's mission—and not of the gradual exploration of character. In fact, this book is no psychological novel. One would do better to go elsewhere if that is what one demands from all contemporary literature.

"Contemporary"—yes, and even with simple morals if one wants to draw on them. It seems likely, however, that the author brought these morals upon himself, by the way as it were, in the manufacture of a plot on which to hang his inventions. Professor Tolkien is a notable philologist and he has created here what amounts to a civilization with a history of its own, and languages, and customs. This gives the book its power as one reads, and it is part of the reason why that power fails the moment one lays the book down. As a legend it almost takes shape. Reading it there are so many details, so many fine descriptions, so much oppression, that one cannot help but be enthralled. But afterwards the enthusiasm vanishes a little. There are not enough references we can put our hands on; it is like an abstract painting which has nothing left of life, as Camus said, except its color. The characters do not involve themselves in any original, informing situations, but the narrative continues, only the description of various repetitive incidents changing.

Yet, as I suggested, no one, not even W. H. Auden, would get so worked up about this achievement, if it were only a child's adventure story. Reading this book one often gets a peculiar feeling of timelessness. This springs partly from the prose, which is anachronistic without the reader being able to say exactly where in the past it could come from. It is often quite beautiful and impressive, moving in the way poetry moves, and in his careful delineation of nature Professor Tolkien manifests a delightful capacity for wonder.

There are quotable passages on every page; here, for example, is King Theoden. He may be a little grandiloquent, but he has just been made aware of the reality of the Ents, the huge Forest people, who have something of the nature of trees. Who wouldn't be shocked?

" 'Ents!' he said at length. 'Out of the shadows of legend I begin a little to understand the marvel of the trees, I think. I have lived to see strange days. Long have we tended our beasts and our fields, built our houses, wrought our tools, or ridden away to help in the wars of Minas Tirith. And that we called the life of men, the way of the world. We cared little for what lay beyond the borders of our land. Songs we have that tell of these things, but we are forgetting them, teaching them only to children, as a careless custom. And now the songs have come down among us out of strange places, and walk visible under the sun.' "

Indeed there are fierce battle scenes; there is a great deal of wry humour; and there is nothing at all sophisticated about it unless it is Professor Tolkien's original conception of strange languages and another, completely foreign Time. The work speaks of Good and Evil, of nobility (in a traditional sense), of honor between men, and of simple courage. It is a large-sized fairy tale which many "grown-ups" might well read, and as such, I think, it should be taken, neither for more nor less. After all, it is something to have fairy-tales made in our day and age.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Good Life

ALL MANNER OF MEN. Edited by Riley Hughes. Kenedy. $3.95.

By JAMES GREENE

THE APPEARANCE of this anthology of fiction by Catholic writers marks the beginning of an important self-examination. It could mean that American Catholic literature is about to come of age, and the American Catholic about to become significantly aware of his own unique tradition. It is, to be sure, a tradition touched by the general stream of American culture, but it is also distinct and autonomous by virtue of its special concerns and direction.

Few who are not American, fewer still who are not Catholic, can understand the problems of the American Catholic artist searching for his proper place in the cultural community. Before all things, the American obsession with "the good life" is an essential part of the whole national creed. It is what we—Catholics and non-Catholics—promise to ourselves and to the world. And our writers, Catholic and non-Catholic, are expected to come to terms with this fact or remain unhonored and unsung. Yet, in coming to terms with a culture, a writer can exploit only those opportunities afforded by the culture, and here the American Catholic meets his greatest challenge.

The deepest assumptions of our daily lives are those that support and promote a golden moment; the deepest commitments of Catholicism are to eternity.

The short stories in Riley's Hughes' anthology, *All Manner of Men,* illustrate this problem, but they do not solve it. In all of them the basic concerns are thoroughly American. In Alma Eckard's "Sharp as a Broken Cup," a young wife is saddled with a burdensome grandfather; without him, life would be good. In Richard Sullivan's "A Pinch of Salt," a young man's romance is smashed by a jealous mother; without her meddling, life could be beautiful. And in Raymond Kennedy's "Nightcrawlers," the jeers of his fellows keep a young boy from the good life.

The elimination of death, evil and sin is effected, so the myth goes, by a pact between man and man; and the pact will usher in that national, social, and conveniently mediate salvation—"the good life."

For this reason, the oft-expressed desire for an "American Greene" or an "American Mauriac" makes no sense. Scobie and Maria Cross are cultural foreigners, and no less so for being fictional. What, one wonders, would those anguished souls make of the American obsession? Each of them catches the light and shade, the wisdom and ignorance of his own culture. And, though the American Catholic knows well enough the ignorance of his race, he has not yet discovered its wisdom.

Certainly, the light of wisdom is essential to a literary work, and the greatest literary achievements are those which are illuminated, not alone by the wisdom of the writer,

A headline news story—
now a headline book—

A Catholic priest takes you inside the Russia few foreigners ever see

World headlines were created when Father Bissonnette, American Chaplain in Moscow, was expelled from the Soviet Union. Now he paints an unforgettably revealing picture of life behind the Iron Curtain, as seen by the only non-Soviet clergyman in Moscow, ministering to parishioners of thirteen nationalities. Father Bissonnette takes you on his travels through outlying regions seldom seen by Westerners. He presents a frank evaluation of religion in Russia today, and re-creates experiences that were by turn tragic, humorous and, always, fascinating and eye-opening.

MOSCOW WAS MY PARISH

A New Glimpse of Life Inside the Soviet Union

By The Reverend GEORGES BISSONNETTE, A.A.

$3.95 *at all bookstores*

McGRAW-HILL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Varied, provocative, often infuriating and rarely dull books"
—TIME

SALVADOR DE
MADARIAGA
HERNAN CORTES, Conqueror of Mexico: A masterpiece of scholarship...a glowing and forceful historical narrative. $6.50

PITIRIM A.
SOROKIN
FADS AND FOIBLES IN MODERN SOCIOLOGY and related sciences: A telling blast at today's mad age of tests and sham scientism. $10.00

RUSSELL
KIRK
BEYOND THE DREAMS OF AVARICE: A group of critical essays on the society of man by the author of *The Conservative Mind.* $4.50

THE SUN and THE SNOW
A novel by RODRIGO ROYO
Love and war between two brothers and a girl among the Spanish troops on the Russian front in the harsh winter of 1941. $3.95

The TORTURED EARTH
A novel by GERT LEDIG
The story of 2 days in the battle for Leningrad...the book that has overwhelmed Germany. $3.75

MOZART
A biography by ANNETTE KOLB
A refreshing and sensitive study. $4.00

All books available at bookstores everywhere

HENRY REGNERY COMPANY
Chicago 4

but also by the accumulated genius of his kind. M. Mauriac's definition of the writer's purpose—"to show the element which holds out against God in the highest and noblest characters—the innermost evils and dissimulations; and also to light up the secret source of sanctity in creatures who seem to us to have failed" —is especially pertinent to the American Catholic writer. For we are being told constantly, both as Catholics and as Americans, of our dissimulations and our failures.

We can, perhaps, take heart in the fact that great contributions to national cultures by Catholic writers of the past—from Dante and Chaucer to Sigrid Undset and Paul Claudel—have remained true, at once, to the faith and to the culture. We have no reason to suppose that twentieth century America is a grand exception. When, and if, an American writes a great Catholic novel, it will be an *American* Catholic novel. But before any such achievement, self-examination is necessary. *All Manner of Men* would be an important book for that reason, even were it not, as it certainly is, a good book.

Mr. Hughes has collected these stories by mostly unknown writers from American Catholic magazines and college journals. And one marvels at the variety he has been able to glean. The categories—"To be Young," "In the Midst of Life," etc. —into which he has placed the stories, perhaps arbitrarily, direct their impact, but this does not detract from their individual excellence.

The twenty-five stories range from the deep sophistication of Joe Dever's "The New York Girls" and Joe Coogan's "Double Skull, Slow Burn, and a Ping" to Joan Hewitt's precocious "Stardust." All are free from religious posturing, though many have religious themes and settings. The stories of nuns in this anthology ("Mutiny of Sister Gervaise," "Reaction" and "The Vicarious Experience") can be successful in overthrowing the notion that the cultural assimilation of American Catholics is best expressed by a *Life* photograph of Sister Prudentiana playing basketball, three veils to the wind.

Mr. Hughes has provided an excellent introduction, which expresses his hope that the anthology will make "readers and writers more aware than they have been before of the recent performance and future potentialities of publication under Catholic auspices." That performance has been encouragingly good. There is reason to expect that future performances will be even better.

Significant Tract for the Time

THE THEME IS FREEDOM. By John Dos Passos. Dodd, Mead & Company. $3.50.

By R. T. HORCHLER

THAT a Communist sympathizer of the 1920's should have become a Taft Republican in the 1950's is not surprising. That he should write a book about his political conversion seems almost obligatory nowadays. But the ex-radical in this case is John Dos Passos, and his political history is in many ways unique. Dos Passos took up with the Communists before it was quite fashionable to do so, and he rejected Communism before the recantation became stylish. He has not found God. He has not found the answers to his questions. And despite the shifts in his political allegiance, his fundamental outlook has remained unchanged.

In *The Theme is Freedom,* Dos Passos has collected significant excerpts from his political writings over the years and has arranged them, without revision, in a chronological and topical order. These documents, ranging from the pamphlet he wrote in behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927 to political reflections published as recently as last year, furnish a complete record of his divergent political postures. As none of this material is new, it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Negro Potential

ELI GINZBERG and other manpower experts here analyze the status of education for the Negro population, showing its implications for manpower organization as well as the means by which Negroes can use their opportunities to the fullest. $3.00

Congressional Politics in the Second World War

ROLAND YOUNG. "This story of the functioning of Congress in wartime is in every way a first-class job. . . . Mr. Young really understands Congress . . . has no special case to make. . . . Very well done indeed."—William S. White in the New York *Times*. $4.50

The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt *and the Origins of the New Deal*

DANIEL ROLAND FUSFELD here dispels the notion that FDR was an economic dilettante and shows the firm foundations upon which his economic philosophy was based. "The serious student of U. S. history will find much to ponder here."—Columbus *Dispatch*. $5.00

Charles McLean Andrews

A. S. EISENSTADT's brilliant study of "the dean of American colonial historians" traces the growth and maturation of the great historian's system and shows the part it played in the larger scene of American historical development. $5.00

Vacations Abroad Volume VIII, 1956

Tourists and students interested in combining education with travel will find in this new edition of UNESCO's authoritative guidebook the details on nearly 950 courses, study tours, and work camps to be held in fifty-seven countries from March to October, 1956. *Paper*, $1.00

Study Abroad, Volume VII 1955-56

The new edition of this popular UNESCO handbook contains information on over 50,000 fellowships, scholarships, and educational exchange programs offered to students by the UN and many other organizations in over seventy countries. *Paper*, $2.00

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

2960 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y.

is chiefly a convenience to have it reproduced in one volume. What is more interesting than the reprints themselves, however, is the commentary Dos Passos has written from the vantage point of today, on them and their author.

The beginning of the book — where the conservative confronts the radical—is more impressive than the end. The resurrected writings in the early sections are mostly narrative—interviews and reports from Boston (on the Sacco-Vanzetti trials), from Moscow, from Harlan, Kentucky (on the miner's strike of 1932), from Valencia and Madrid during the civil war. These are pointedly detailed, vivid accounts of memorable historical events, and they are still well worth the reading. Dos Passos' reconsideration of them, too, is most enlightening in this portion of the book. He can be detached about the 20's and 30's, and can view the facts with the perspective of the years. He probes deeply into the mind and motives of the younger Dos Passos, and the result is true autobiography.

As the dates of the articles draw closer to the present, however, they become increasingly abstract and verbal, more and more preachy in tone. What there is of straight reporting tends to be fragmentary and inconsequential: lunch conversations with unidentified "personages," one-minute interviews with government officials, single episodes observed in travel. The reappraisals become less helpful as they become less personal, as Dos Passos' concern shifts from himself and the times to questions of political theory. And as the distance between past and present views diminishes, the then-and-now debate loses its point. The last chapters might be one long essay, despite the careful dating of the selections and the retention of italic print for the "re-examinations."

But what are Dos Passos' political beliefs? He is the idealist who finds the human condition intolerable, who demands the millennium *now*. The imperfections he sees in the social organization arouse in him an instant, violent opposition

THEY SAW HIS GLORY

By Maisie Ward

Modern scholarship and archeology have thrown much light on the New Testament, but little of it has reached the ordinary Catholic reader, the sort of Catholic who found *Theology and Sanity* to his taste. This book, written with the same kind of reader in mind, contains all the most interesting findings of recent years, combined with the traditional wisdom of the Church. The four Gospels and Acts are covered and there is an introductory chapter on the world into which Christ came.

Ready on May 16th

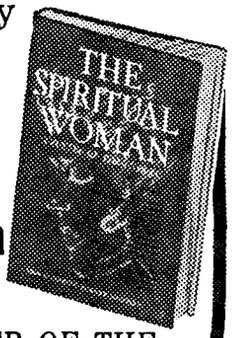
$4.50 at any bookstore

There is an article on this book in the current number of Sheed & Ward's OWN TRUMPET. To get the Trumpet, free and postpaid, write to Lucy MacGill at—

SHEED & WARD, New York 3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Have You Read
This Inspiring Book
Edited by
Marion Turner Sheehan



WINNER OF THE
Christopher Award
1955

THE
Spiritual Woman

TRUSTEE OF THE FUTURE

"The purpose of this book is to stir the conscience of American women...to make a fight to save the moral standards and the belief in God which the Founding Fathers wrote into the Constitution."—from the Foreword by ANNE O'HARE MCCORMICK

"Here 14 distinguished women have written of the human qualities which have made their own lives creative and fruitful."
—Senator MARGARET CHASE SMITH, in *The Congressional Record*

$3.00 at your bookstore or from

HARPER & BROTHERS, N. Y. 16

to the status quo. When he saw economic injustice as the besetting evil of our capital system, he advocated socialism as the cure. The remedy for the first evil having inevitably brought its own evils—bureaucracy, centralism, loss of individual liberty—he has accordingly aligned himself with the opposing forces—rugged individualism, states' rights and conservatism generally.

As a materialist and determinist, Dos Passos continues to seek the elimination of evil through some sort of manipulation of environment. He is, naturally, and to his mounting desperation, no nearer success today than he was thirty years ago. In recent years he has seen the way to social beatitude in a return to the family-sized farm, in technological progress, and, in *The Theme is Freedom,* in a vague reliance on the "new science" of sociology. We must respect Dos Passos for his struggle against despair, for his courage and good will, but the sermonizing grows foolish and the shrill voice wearisome.

The value of *The Theme is Freedom* is not in its political thought—although we cannot deny Dos Passos his perceptions—but in its vitalization of recent history and, chiefly, in the light it throws on the mind of its author. One of the most gifted writers of his generation, he has served the Republic better than he has his art, and this is a tract for the times.

Uncrystallized Matter

THE FLIGHT FROM THE ENCHANTER. By Iris Murdoch. Viking. $3.75.

By JOHN P. SISK

THOSE perplexed readers of Miss Murdoch's novel who consult the jacket will discover that the author has written a study of Sartre. They may conclude that she is up to existentialist business and go back to their reading, perhaps no more enlightened but with the satisfaction of moving within a named category.

The jacket writer will also tell them that "to describe the plot *per se* would be like taking a violin apart to describe the sound." I will take him at his word and proceed to the characters. They are: a fabulously wealthy cosmopolite (presumably the enchanter) who is an ambiguous thread of mystery stitched through the story; a "bewitched and bewitching child of nature" who runs away from boarding school to enter the School of Life; her dressmaker who ultimately commits suicide; a fumbling young editor of a futile and moribund magazine; his beautiful sister who has a grotesque double affair with two sinister Polish brothers; an historian who is baffled as much by the sister as by a script he is trying to decipher; a government bureaucrat who, though in love with the sister, finds himself inexplicably engaged to his secretary; a tipsy and eccentric widow who comes to the aid of the magazine; a blackmailer and dispenser of erotic photography who is trying to buy the magazine for his master (or slave?), the mysterious cosmopolite.

The complex story of these people is often brilliant, sometimes disturbing and very often baffling. One would like to shoulder off the critical burden by classifying the novel as existentialist and quoting Sartre's statement about existential novels: ". . . we had to leave doubts, hesitations, and uncrystallized matter everywhere in our work." Equally attractive is the temptation to dismiss it as a witty and poetic harlequinade, written, as a reviewer said of Miss Murdoch's earlier *Under the Net,* just for the fun of it.

But these devices will not satisfy the reader's conviction that this is, like Kafka's *The Castle,* an elaborate and purposeful structure, and that the author's bizarre combination of everyday-London life with a strange kind of hyperbolic fantasy has, if anything, too intricate a burden of meaning. One has the tantalizing, and often irritating, sense

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WOMAN
IN THE MODERN WORLD

Eva Firkel

A new picture of woman slowly begins to take shape when a woman becomes conscious of herself without exaggerating her importance, and when she sees herself as the defender of human dignity. Today motherhood is by no means her only task; many others are waiting for her in public, political, social and cultural life. The book speaks about this new picture of woman. $3.50

COME
HOLY SPIRIT

Leonce de Grandmaison, S.J.

A detailed book of spiritual direction, *Come Holy Spirit* helps the reader develop a more intense union with God, a docility to the Holy Spirit and a spirit of prayer. $2.95

YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

Edited by Eugene Geissler

A child's home life sets the pattern for his future life and living. This book shows you how to develop the religious and social character of your children at home. Written from the experiences of families seeking a Christian life, the book talks about the meaning of pregnancy and new life to both the mother and the family, sex education for children, the family at prayer and the problems of the adolescent. $2.95

At All Bookstores

FIDES PUBLISHERS
Chicago 19, Illinois

that every moment in the story is symbolically charged, but that the prism to gather its glittering spectrum back into a white unity is not available.

We are told by the jacket writer that the novel combines high comedy and serious purpose. There are indeed some splendidly comic scenes. For me, Chapter Eight, a brilliant exposition of *homo bureaucratiens,* and Chapter Fourteen, a superb variation on a theme from Pope's *Rape of the Lock,* are the best of these. But otherwise the pull of the half-glimpsed undermeaning tends to inhibit the laughter. Too many potentially hilarious scenes give one the impression of being constructed to a thesis, and often, if it were not for the suspected support of a thesis, they would simply be trite.

What one is finally left with, then, is a vision of futility and absurdity that is sometimes comic but more often oddly grotesque. With the exception of the blackmailer and the sinister Polish brothers, who seem to fare quite well, these people are indecisive, paralyzed, confused or doomed. They cannot commit themselves to action; they fail to get through to one another; they prey upon each other; they drift or blunder into fantastic involvements; in their desperate search for release they indulge in frustrating amours. They are for the most part blind souls in captivity.

Strangely (or appropriately?), it is the blackmailer to whom Miss Murdoch assigns what appears to be some of the most pointed statements. He says, for instance, to the ingenuous child of nature: "The notion that one can liberate another soul from captivity is an illusion of the very young." And later he says to a victim (or beneficiary?): "Reality is a cipher with many solutions, all of them right ones." But the reader is likely to take most to heart one of the historian's final remarks: "One reads the signs as best one can, and one may be totally misled," and wonder for an uneasy moment if it might not be applied to the novel he has been reading.

THE LIFE OF BLESSED CLAUDE LA COLOMBIERE

PERFECT FRIEND

by Georges Guitton, S.J.
Translated by
William J. Young, S. J.

The fascinating epic of an unforgettable religious hero, called by Pope Leo XIII, "the outstanding promotor and defender of the most salutary devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus." $6.00.

THE NAMES OF CHRIST

by Louis of Leon, O.S.A.
An inspiring commentary on the various names which are applied to Christ in Sacred Scripture, characterized by humane sympathy, poetic charm, and devotion to Christ. Filled with inspiring and practical applications to the spiritual life. $4.75.

PSYCHOLOGY

by H. D. Gardeil, O. P.

Father John A. Otto is making available translations of the four-volume set of Gardeil's *Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas,* which has found such enthusiastic welcome abroad in the original French. PSYCHOLOGY, which presents St. Thomas' philosophical doctrine of animate nature, is the first to appear. A distinctive merit of this book is the fullness of treatment accorded the intellectual soul, and the inclusion of matters not found in works of similar scope and purpose. Of special value also are the readings from St. Thomas appended to the volume. Teachers and students alike will be gratified with the English version of this outstanding work. $4.00.

At Your Booksellers

B. HERDER BOOK CO.
Publishers
15 AND 17 SOUTH BROADWAY
ST. LOUIS 2, MO.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Both Your Houses

THE GREEN MARE. By Marcel Aymé. Harper. $3.

By HENRY POPKIN

THIS extravagantly comic account of a family feud in provincial France is not quite a typical Marcel Aymé novel. Usually M. Aymé turns his acute, malicious intelligence upon a thousand targets and annihilates them. The wit and malice are present in *The Green Mare* as usual, with perhaps the malice enjoying a little extra prominence, but M. Aymé has also chosen to love, unashamedly, some of his characters. The objects of his scorn are the immoral, incestuous, reactionary Maloret family and stingy, puritanical Ferdinand Haudoin, who wavers between clericalism and republicanism. Ferdinand's improvident brother Honoré invites our admiration; he is a hearty, healthy man of the soil who is full of deep, instinctive republicanism, anti-clericalism, and limitless sexual vitality. The resultant mixture of elements in the novel is sometimes a bit incongruous—Mr. Aymé's satirical wit and the easy-going, pastoral, sub-intellectual atmosphere of those movies about provincial France. Honoré might have been played by Raimu. He is the archetype of the gnarled, lovable peasant, and he is in fact so lovable that M. Aymé's wit veers sharply away whenever it comes in his direction.

The Malorets and the Haudoins have been feuding for a long time, but their enmity has been especially stimulated by an incident in the Franco-Prussian War. Directed by Maloret, Prussian soldiers look for snipers in the Haudoin house, and one of them violates Honoré's mother. Years later, Honoré seethes when his brother, urging him to support Maloret for the office of Mayor, tries to belittle the offense: "The whole thing remains revolting, of course, but after all she only yielded to one man, and he was a sergeant. In fact, we cannot even be sure that he was not an officer." Finally, Honoré achieves revenge duplicating the original indignity.

Some of this is quite funny, especially the acid account of Ferdinand and the family over which he tyrannizes. (He habitually uses education to enforce discipline. He decides to punish a child who has been daydreaming: "Well, since you aren't thinking about anything you can tell me the date of the signing of the peace of Westphalia.") And there is much to be said for the friendly portrait of Deodat the postman, who goes about his duties in a sort of dream-state, hypnotized by a sense of his own importance. M. Aymé's view of the priests and of the clerical party is more malicious and, accordingly, less comic.

What chiefly gets in the novelist's way is his obvious affection for Honoré and for the deep-lying well springs of his profoundly instinctive behavior. (What other motivation can there be for a man of the soil?) Often the behavior of Honoré and his family is so instinctive that it is barely intelligible. Thus, Honoré urges his son Ernest to help vengeance along by courting the Malorets' daughter Marguerite; that the son declines is credible enough, but it is perhaps more surprising that Honoré also declines when Marguerite unexpectedly offers herself to him. Odder still is the matter of a letter written by Ferdinand to Honoré and plainly referring to the circumstances of their mother's disgrace. When the letter is lost, the Haudoin brothers assume the Malorets have it in the house. But Honoré's daughter Juliette has found the note and concealed it in the house. Honoré's wife finds it and, without a word to her husband, returns it to the hiding place. One can think up motives for Honoré's wife, but Juliette should not wish to keep the feud going by deceiving her father about the letter; since she loves a young Maloret, she presumably would prefer to establish peace between the families. Go argue with an instinct! That is one encounter that M. Aymé declines.

"Dear parents, I have been condemned to death..."

So begins the letter of a young boy who would rather die than commit or condone murder. Under the Nazi terror, hundreds of men and women of all faiths were faced with the same choice. This book brings together their last messages, written in the face of death. It is an inspiring record of faith and courage. Not since the acts of the martyrs of the early Church have there been such stirring testimonials of a faith triumphant in death. A book for everyone in search of the sources of spiritual strength.

Dying We Live

Forewords by Reinhold Niebuhr and George N. Shuster
$4.50 at all bookstores.

A PANTHEON BOOK

For a continuing evaluation of new books and writers—

A Trial Subscription to The Commonweal

17 Weeks $2 — Order Form on page 162

A Catholic Book Service—A thorough search service for out-of-print books. Any subject or language. New and current books supplied.

Store: 6904 Roosevelt Road, Oak Park, Illinois
Hours: Evenings, 7 to 10; Saturdays, 10 to 10

All mail communications to
C. F. PETELLE
Box 289, Maywood, Illinois

LA SALLE
MILITARY ACADEMY

America's foremost Catholic Military School, under the Christian Brothers. Intellectual progress, spiritual development, physical fitness. Accredited college preparation. Grades 8-12. Small classes. Senior ROTC. 160-acre campus. 73rd year. 50 miles from New York City. Visitors welcome. Catalog.

Box W, Oakdale, Long Island, New York

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Educational

MARYLAND

College of Notre Dame of Maryland

North Charles St., Baltimore 10, Maryland. A fully accredited Catholic College for women, conducted by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Courses leading to B.A. degree, with concentration in Art, Languages, Literature, Sciences, Music, Social Studies, Speech, Mathematics, Philosophy and Theology. Workshops in Creative Writing. Education courses leading to teacher certification. Pre-medical and laboratory technical training. Full Physical Education program, including Swimming. Address the Registrar.

INDIANA

Saint Mary's College Notre Dame

Graduate School of Sacred Theology. For Sisters and Lay-women. Distinguished faculty of Religious and Lay Professors. Saint Mary's College, Box 11, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Classified

★RATES, payable in advance: 16⅔c a word (6 words, $1). Centered lines $1 each. 12 words or 2 lines minimum. Discounts: 5% for 3 times, 10% for 7 times, 15% for 13 times.

IRISH BOOKS AND GIFTS

★ Books, Linens, Gifts, *Catalogs.* IRISH INDUSTRIES DEPOT, INC. 870 Lexington Ave., (near 65th), New York

CHESTERTON AND BELLOC

★Scarce Chesterton and Belloc Books 250 Titles. Free Catalogue. Prosser, 3118 N. Keating, Chicago 41, Ill.

STATUES

★Every kind of religious statue and painting done to order. Reasonable. ST. BENEDICT STUDIO Westport, Conn.

PRINTED LABELS

★ 500 Gummed Labels, printed 3 lines, $1. HERDMAN, 520 Belleville Ave., Belleville, N. J.

WRITERS WANTED

★FREELANCE WRITERS, well acquainted with an industry or firm: top prices paid for factual think pieces on corporate democracy (or its absence), participation in management by employes, shareholders or consumers. First outline briefly to JEFFERY, 246 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C. 1, MU 3-9600.

Test of Love

COVENTRY PATMORE. By E. J. Oliver. Sheed and Ward. $4.

By BETTE RICHART

MR. OLIVER has written a luminous little book. Like Lord David Cecil, he is a biographer who does not intrude, who remains detached even while interpreting—a subtle accomplishment, essential for his rather thankless art. One is sorry that he must suffer a fate traditional since Boswell: reviewers must pass him over lightly in favor of his controversial subject.

Coventry Patmore is certainly that—a convert as rebellious as Orestes Brownson, as independent as Lord Acton, as witty as Chesterton. In fact, Mr. Oliver has emphasized the raconteur so effectively that the poet-mystic is occasionally lost in the shuffle. That is just as well, since those who read poetry are already aware that Patmore considered himself the poet of marriage, had three wives, and in his old age fell in love with Alice Meynell.

His first wife, Emily, mother of six of his children, was also the true dynamo of his life-work. She was so beautiful that Browning wrote one of his best poems for her, and the Patmores shared fifteen radiant years, during which the enraptured young husband wrote his only best-seller, "The Angel in the House." Ruskin praised it highly, and success was added to happiness.

Emily's death was a literal calamity for Patmore, who, like so many "independent" people, was not very self-sufficient. Aubrey de Vere persuaded him to go to Rome; there he met his second wife, and was also received into the Church. His commentaries on Roman life remind one of Ronald Firbank's therapeutic cynicism; he was never deceived by appearances, and the more bizarre the scene, the more it interested him. One can imagine Firbank saying "The fig leaf has invaded the Vatican," or "It is just as Catholic to have a statue of the Venus de

IMPORTANT BOOKS

RETREAT FROM LEARNING

By JOAN DUNN

You'll know why Johnny can't read when you read why public school teachers can't teach. From her own experience a Catholic teacher tells this shocking inside story of public school chaos. "A slashing attack on Progressive education . . . irrefutably right."—*Our Sunday Visitor.* $3.50

TRUE MORALITY AND ITS COUNTERFEITS

By DIETRICH von HILDEBRAND with ALICE JOURDAIN

The author of *Christian Ethics* looks into such modern trends as "circumstance ethics" (Existentialism) and the concept of "sin mysticism." His exploration of these "counterfeits" is followed by a penetrating analysis of true Christian morality. $3.00

THE THIRD DOOR

The Autobiography of an American Negro Woman

By ELLEN TARRY

She was born in race-conscious Alabama, and converted to Catholicism. Her life story is "written with courage and dignity. I found it absorbing and dramatic." — BERNARD J. SHEIL, D. D. *Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago.* $3.50

THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

By ADRIENNE Von SPEYR

Translated by Alexander Dru. "Twenty-three mediations on the Gospel story of Mary. The last four mediations deal with Mary's position in the Church, in man's prayer life, and in the vital question of vocation."—*Books on Trial.* "A rewarding experience."—*Integrity.* $3.00

At your bookseller

DAVID McKAY Co., Inc.

55 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE COMMONWEAL, 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

Enclosed is $2. Please send the next 17 issues to:

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

5/11/56

Special Introductory Offer

17 Issues for $2

(NOT FOR CURRENT RENEWALS)

Milo on the mantelpiece as one of the Blessed Virgin." This kind of shock treatment for complacency was one of Patmore's important services to the Church, though he himself did not see it so.

He saw himself as born to explore the ways in which human love prefigures divine, and in his second major poem, "The Unknown Eros," he succeeds here and there in this difficult purpose. The conflict between will and feeling is always violent for the poet, and of this conflict, pearl-like, the poem is born. Patmore was fascinated by some of the obvious parallels between saints and poets, but a saint's conflict lies between his own will and God's; he is seldom the ping-pong ball of his own feeling. Patmore was unable to live without sexual love, even at sixty, and married again a year after the death of his second wife. Perhaps recognizing in himself what our century would call emotional insecurity, he attacked bitterly the concept of virginity as a rewarding discipline, and had little understanding of that love, selfless but fervent, which is the pulse of the religious life. Reciprocity, not generosity, was his test of love, and it is significant that he could not bear to dwell upon the Crucifixion.

Yet in his work, if not in his life, he moved at last beyond sensation toward revelation, and in his curious book of aphorisms, "The Rod, the Root, and the Flower," he has left precepts for the spiritual life which exceed, in both scope and technique, his best poetry. "To him that waits all things reveal themselves, provided that he has the courage not to deny, in the darkness, what he has seen in the light." The profundity is Patmore's, but the good sense and good taste which have retrieved it from surrounding absurdity are Mr. Oliver's.

RECENT AND NOTABLE

Christian Asceticism and Modern Man. Philosophical Library. $6.

Originally published in French, these essays by distinguished theologians, psychologists and doctors such as L. Bouyer, M. D. Chenu, O.P., Dr. Gregory Zilboorg and François de Sainte-Marie, O.C.D., present both a history of Christian asceticism and its place in the Church today.

Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence. By André Hodeir. Translated by David Noakes. Grove Press. $3.50.

A trained musical analyst and a composer as well as an experienced performer, M. Hodeir has written a major esthetic study of jazz.

Communism and Christianity. By Martin D'Arcy. Penguin Books. $.65.

Father Martin D'Arcy here examines the principal tenets of Communism, comparing and contrasting them with those of Christianity. He assesses their validity in terms of the answers they give to basic problems of human existence.

Kipling: A Selection of His Stories and Poems. Edited by John Beecroft. Doubleday. II Vols. $7.50.

A fine collection of Kipling's most important and well-known works, including *Kim, Just So Stories, Puck of Pook's Hill,* "Without Benefit of Clergy," "The Mark of the Beast," "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi," "Gunga Din," "Recessional," "The 'Mary Gloster'," and many others.

Mid-Century French Poets. Edited by Wallace Fowlie. Grove Press. $1.45.

In addition to a general introduction, Mr. Fowlie contributes a bibliography and special introduction for important French poets of our century. Among those included are Max Jacob, Jules Supervielle, St. John Perse, Paul Eluard, Henri Breton, and Henri Michaux.

Bishop Lancelot Andrewes. By Maurice F. Reidy. Loyola University Press. $3.50.

This specialized study of Lancelot Andrewes is aptly described by its subtitle, a study in early seventeenth-century religious thought.

Played by Ear: The Autobiography of Father Daniel A. Lord, S.J. Hanover House: Loyola University Press. $4.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Book Stores

NEW YORK, N. Y.

THE GUILD BOOK SHOP

117 E. 57th St., N.Y. 22—PLaza 5-0225

Crucifixes and Statues by modern artists
Exceptional stock of Catholic Books
Cards for all occasions. Catalog on request.

WESTMINSTER, MD.

For the Best Catholic Books

THE NEWMAN BOOKSHOP

Westminster, Maryland

WASHINGTON, D. C.

W. J. GALLERY & CO.

Catholic Books

718 11th St., NORTHWEST

WHEELING, W. VA.

CORCORAN'S CHURCH GOODS CO.

Steubenville, O. & Wheeling, W. Va.

Publisher MacEachen Catechisms

"Every Religious Article Manufactured"

COLUMBUS, O.

Cathedral Bookshop
and
Catholic Information Center
205 EAST BROAD STREET
(Opposite Cathedral Square)
COLUMBUS 15, OHIO

COLUMBUS, O

Gantner

THE H. R. GANTNER CO.

Ecclesiastical Goods

82 So. Fourth Street, Columbus 15, Ohio
Distinctive Vestments—Church Appointments
CApital 4-7083

ST. LOUIS, MO.

B. HERDER BOOK CO.

TWO STORES
15 AND 17 SOUTH BROADWAY
1007 OLIVE STREET
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

DETROIT, MICH.

E. J. McDEVITT CO.

Catholic books, religious articles
1230 Washington Boulevard
Detroit 26, Michigan
WOodard 5-2992

ST. PAUL, MINN.

THE E. M. LOHMANN CO.

413-417 Sibley St. St. Paul 1, Minn.

Phone CApital 2-6888-6889

Father Lord, well-known for his plays, lectures, newspaper columns, pamphlets and books, wrote, before his death, this warm and moving account of a full life in which he was a teacher, an editor, an adviser to Cecil B. DeMille, the author of the Motion Picture Code, and director of Summer Schools of Catholic Action.

Six Prose Comedies of Moliere. Translated by George Graveley. Oxford. $3.75.

Mr. Graveley, an actor as well as good translator, has produced modern, readable versions of six plays, which include *The Self-Made Gentleman (Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme), Coxcombs in Petticoats (Les Précieuses Ridicules), The Miser (L'Avare)* and *Don Juan.*

Green Armor on Green Ground. By Rolfe Humphries. Scribner's. $2.75.

Mr. Humphries, the winner of the 1955 Fellowship awarded by the Academy of American Poets, has provided an introduction and explanatory appendix in which he discusses the adaptation of Welsh meter to English verse. The actual adaptation may be disputed, but the poems can stand on their own merit.

Faith, Reason and Modern Psychiatry: Sources for a Synthesis. Edited by Francis J. Braceland, M.D. Kenedy. $6.

An attempt to bring together several disciplines and to deal with major themes common to psychiatry and religion, this book contains penetrating essays by Karl Stern, Rudolf Allers, Gregory Zilboorg, Jordan Aumann, and Noel Mailloux, and several other doctors and theologians.

REVIEWERS

Anthony Bailey is a member of the editorial staff of *The New Yorker.*

James Greene is an editor with the *Atomic Industrial Forum.*

R. T. Horchler is a member of the English faculty of St. Peter's College.

John P. Sisk contributes frequently to this and other American journals.

Henry Popkin is a member of the faculty of Brandeis University.

Bette Richart contributes poetry and criticism to various journals.

A *must* book for 4,000,000 students and their parents

The Catholic in Secular Education

By James M. O'Neill

This is a penetrating exploration and explanation of the conditions, atmosphere, dangers, handicaps and opportunities Catholic students face in secular schools and colleges—where an acute and worsening shortage of parochial and Catholic institutions will send them. Dr. O'Neill's program outlines, for parents, pastors and youth advisors particularly, just how the Catholic student or teacher can overcome the fear of surrendering his beliefs and utilize his position both to strengthen his own faith and further general understanding of it. $3.50

They Speak by Silences

By a Carthusian

These extracts from the letters of an unknown Carthusian monk reflect the serenity of one who had attained perfect fullness with God. Their message is both a call for a spiritual awakening and a guide to all those in quest of peace of soul. $1.75

The Road to "Human Destiny"

By
Mary Lecomte du Noüy

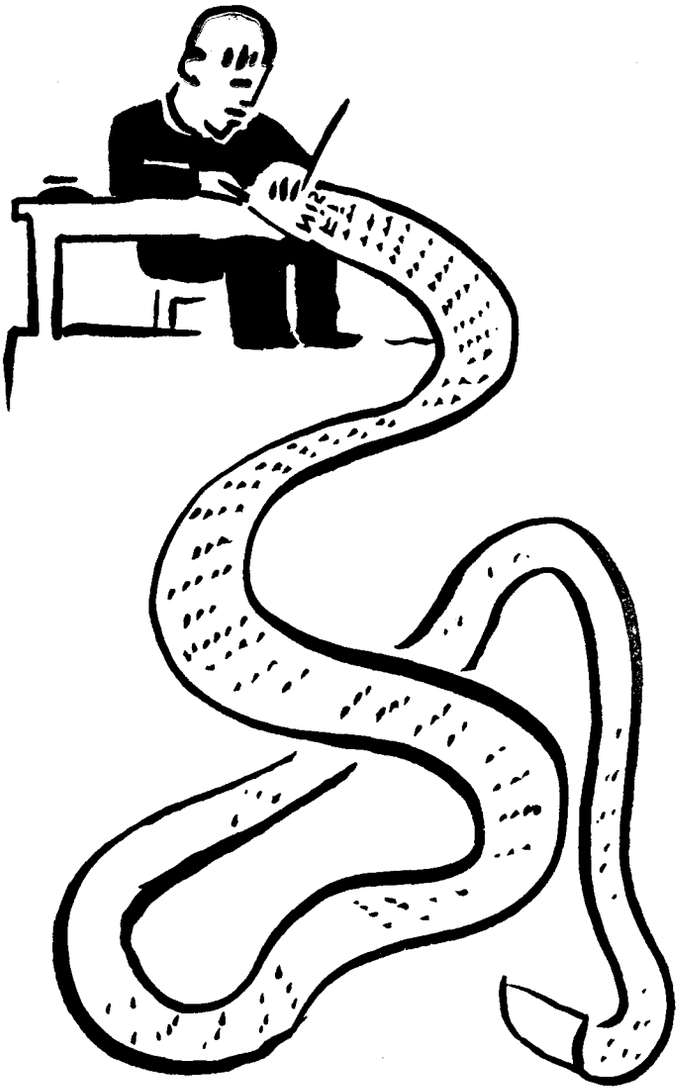
"Mary Lecomte de Noüy's account of her husband's life as a long, arduous, and yet luminous preparation for a victorious hour which struck just before his tragic death, is warmly and intimately personal . . . In particular all those entrusted with the job of education will find this book stimulating and encouraging."—*Saturday Review* $5.00

At all bookstores

Longmans, Green and Co.
55 Fifth Ave., New York 3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TO BE PUBLISHED ON MAY SIXTEENTH



Msgr. Knox's translation of the whole Bible

in

ONE VOLUME

This is the only complete, new Catholic translation of the Bible.

The Family Edition ($8.50) is bound in dark red cloth and has red edges, a silk marker and eight decorated pages for keeping family records. It is especially appropriate as a wedding present, but do try to remember *not* to give it as an Ordination gift! The Regular Edition ($7.50), in maroon cloth, is the one for this and for Graduations—most graduations, anyway. Both editions are strongly bound, printed in good, clear type and dressed in handsome jackets.

See them at your bookstore

Naturally, there is more about this in Sheed & Ward's OWN TRUMPET: to get the Trumpet, free and postpaid, write to Lucy MacGill at—

SHEED & WARD **New York 3**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED